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Xinhua Photo



Miss Tourism hopefuls study at Shaolin

By Zhang Dongya

The 115 Miss Tourism International 2008 finalists visited the Shaolin Temple in the Songshan Mountains, Henan Province, Wednesday. The group watched a 10-minute kung fu demonstration by temple monks, and then was divided into six groups for

brief lessons.

Olga Zarubina from Russia, last year's Miss Tourism champion, was present. The Shaolin temple was the group's last stop in Zhengzhou. It went on to travel through Kaifeng, Luoyang and other Henan cities.

CFP Photo

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Ministry says corruption a top priority

By Han Manman

To give environmental monitors and law enforcers more muscle is the top priority for the new Environmental Protection Ministry, Zhou Shengxian, minister of environmental protection, said this week in his first conference since the reshuffle.

"The new ministry will be better equipped to crack down on environmental crime, and we will expand our enforcement and surveillance teams," Zhou said. Enforcement will not differentiate between foreign-invested and domestic companies.

The ministry will "handle some heavyweight and influential cases

this year," he said.

At a special Tuesday meeting of his new Cabinet, Premier Wen Jiabao vowed that fighting corruption will top his agenda.

Wen said over-concentration of power and ineffective supervision provided fertile breeding ground for corruption. Anti-corruption measures should give prominence to establishing systematic restrictions to such unsupervised power, the premier said.

He said the previous Cabinet session had made improvements in resolving some serious cases of corruption and cracking down on commercial bribery, but scandals involving government departments

and officials had increased and some huge bribery cases enraged the public.

Chen Qinghai, a deputy to the National People's Congress, said in this year's session that corruption breeds easier in industries such as real estate, medicine and medical appliance purchase and sales, since administrative power is still focused on these industries.

The Communist Party of China announced early this week that 2,111 officials had been punished for misconduct during the reshuffles of local governments, legislatures and political advisory bodies in the last year.

Among them, 1,948 officials

were disciplined and another 163 received administrative punishment, including suspension, demotion or removal from their posts.

A total of 1,885 cases of malpractice, including bribery, were uncovered, according to statements at a national meeting jointly held by the Party's Organization Department and the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

The two departments issued circulars to warn officials of corruption in the reshuffle. They promised to harshly punish those found to be buying and selling government posts or offering bribes for higher positions.

Last year's salary averages released

By Li Fenghua

The average annual Beijing salary last year was 39,867 yuan, a spokesman from Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics announced.

But looking at the actual data, the average Beijinger may have made a lot more – or less.

The average annual earnings of securities industry employees was more than 100,000 yuan – the highest salary average in all of 2007, the spokesman said.

Other average salaries that broke the 100,000 mark were pipe, water and air transportation workers, as well as bank workers.

The average annual salary of employees in the insurance, tobacco, legal, oil and natural gas, media, engineering and planning, telecom and IP services was 80,000 to 100,000 yuan.

Salaries less than 20,000 yuan were had by stationery, textile, agriculture, clothing, metal and non-metal collection, leather and fur production industry workers.

However, the spokesman said salaries vary wildly even within each industry due to the economical and the industry's responsible institutions. In the securities sector, the most highly paid employees earned more than 1 million per year, but others earned less than 40,000 yuan, the spokesman said.

China responds to censures on Beijing Games

By Zhang Dongya

The government criticized Tuesday a British newspaper's report that linked the Beijing Olympics to the Berlin Games of 1936, saying the report is an insult to Chinese citizens and to the people of the world, *Xinhua* reported.

A report published in the *Sunday Times*, a British newspaper, said China is holding the Olympic Games for the same reason Adolf Hitler did in 1936: as an opportunity to collect accolades.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said the Olympics is a magnificent sports meet, and people from all nations wish to take it as an opportunity to enhance global understanding, friendship and cooperation.

"The Olympic torch symbolizes mankind's noble ideals and beautiful aspirations," Qin said. "It also casts light on the gloomy mentality of some people, which will help the common people see those people's true face."

Qin also refuted on Sunday a warning that US visitors would be under surveillance during the Games, saying the privacy of foreign visitors would be protected.

"There is no special arrangement which is beyond the security measures widely employed in accordance with international rules at public locations, hotels and offices in China," Qin said.

Qin was responding to a question concerning a warning released by the US department's Bureau of Consular Affairs last Thursday, which said hotel rooms and offices in Beijing are subject to remote technical monitoring and may be accessed at any time without the occupant's consent or knowledge.

"The warning by the US bureau is irresponsible... Privacy in China is always under protection according to the law, and there is no need for foreign visitors to worry about that," Qin said.

"The Beijing Olympic Games will be a success thanks to efforts made by the people of the world," Qin said in the Regular Press Conference Tuesday.

Taipei in town to talk pandas



By Zhang Dongya

Yang Xiaodong, director of the Department of Information and Tourism in Taipei, Taiwan Province, visited the panda house at The Beijing Zoo Wednesday and talked with the zoo about sending pandas

to Taiwan.

"Taipei is ready to receive Tuantuan and Yuanyuan," Yang said. The Taipei Zoo will build an NT \$250 million panda house this June. The zoo has planted six hectares of bamboo forest for the pandas on the

zoo's mountains.

Tuantuan and Yuanyuan currently live in the Wolong Nature Reserve of Sichuan Province. "They are in good condition and can be sent to Taiwan anytime," the manager of the reserve said. CFP Photo

Pilots required to report passenger information before landing

By Bai Jingnan

Starting this May, international flights must transmit information about passengers and crew before landing in China. Flights which fail to or send false information may be fined up to 30,000 yuan.

On Tuesday, the Ministry of Public Security and Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) announced the new policy and its implementation.

International flights must

report passenger information to the Frontier Inspection Station completely, precisely and timely. Information must include the name, nationality, gender, birth date as well as passport number and expiration date.

According to the regulations, if the flight time is more than two hours, the pilot must announce the required information an hour and a half before arrival.

The fine will be 10,000 yuan if the airplane reports the wrong

number of passengers and crew within 10 people. Its count is off by more than 10, the fine will be raised 1,000 yuan for each person but not exceeding 30,000.

The US and Canada have similar regulations, and Japan and Korea have recently adopted the same. Experts said it is due to Olympic security concerns.

Starting March 26, CAAC requires all passengers to remove their shoes when boarding for safety checks.

Brief news

City subways go 24-7 for Olympic Games

Beijing subways will be open 24 hours per day on the opening and closing days of the Olympic Games.

The move is aimed to relieve heavy traffic on August 8 and 24, while operating hours will be extended on other days of the Games. Subway stations will have "green channels" for ticket holders, Games staff and volunteers, who will be exempted from paying the 2-yuan fare.

25 dead, 10 injured in fireworks blast

Twenty-five people were killed and 10 injured by a firecracker explosion in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Wednesday.

The accident happened at about 7 pm when city authorities in Turpan were destroying firecrackers in the desert 7 to 8 kilometers from the Turpan tollgate, local officials said. The fire was extinguished and an investigation is underway.

Longest sea bridge to open May Day

The world's longest bridge over sea, Hangzhou Bay Bridge, will go into service on May 1, a month earlier than expected, the construction headquarters said.

The 36-kilometer Hangzhou Bay Bridge starts at Jiaxing, near Shanghai, and ends at Cixi, about 70 kilometers from Ningbo, Zhejiang Province.

(By Han Manman)

Fake tiger provided by circus ringleader



A photo from the fake South China tiger clip.

Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

By Gan Tian

A Pingjiang County TV Station recorded a 20-second clip of the rare South China tiger in the wild last Thursday. After a four-day investigation, Hunan Forestry Bureau confirmed that the tiger was reared in captivity and the reporter borrowed it from a circus boss.

The local tourism bureau director was forced to resign for his involvement in the hoax.

Wu Hua, the reporter, said the big cat "jumped in front of his camera" while he was shooting a documentary in a mountainous region in Shiniuzhai, Pingjiang County, Hunan Province. National media said it was a wild South China tiger.

The Hunan Forestry Bureau immediately sent 24 experts to the site. After doing research on the shape, footprints and other features, the team found the tiger was actually a Siberian tiger.

The team learned that Sheng Jianhua, the boss of a Shiniuzhai tourist destination and a circus, took a Siberian tiger from the circus to a camp and let Wu film its activity.

Sheng admitted to the set up and said it was intended to "attract more tourists."

The case brought back memories of Zhou Zhenglong, the Shaanxi Province villager who said he snapped 30 pictures of the big cat last October. The Shaanxi Forestry Department made an official announcement of the tiger sighting, but the photos did not survive netizen and expert scrutiny. The National Forestry Ministry's team of experts was sent to investigate, but their findings remain sealed.

The Shaanxi Forestry Department apologized last month for releasing the photos, but stated nothing about their authenticity. No credible evidence exists to show the existence of a wild South China tiger.

Modern Express, a Jiangsu local newspaper, said now is the time for the National Forestry Ministry to face responsibility and to evaluate Zhou's photos. *Southern Metropolis Daily*, based in Guangzhou, said the case marked progress in the government's handling of difficult issues.

Hep B carrier fired after health check

By Li Fenghua

Zhang Li (pseudonym), 33, was fired by Wm Wrigley Jr's Hanzhou branch when a health checkup confirmed that he carried the Hepatitis B virus.

Zhang worked in the branch's distribution department as early as 2002. In 2004, he was reassigned by Wrigley to Beijing Duoqi Consultancy.

Last August, the company required all employees to undergo health exams. Zhang was nervous about the checkup since he had not told the company he was a Hepatitis B carrier: he was afraid he would be discharged.

His worries turned out to be true when he was unceremoniously fired after the results came back.

Zhang said his firing was an act of discrimination and sued the Duoqi Company. The Chaoyang Court of Justice accepted the case and Tuesday named Wm Wrigley Jr as a third party.

"Although I am a Hepatitis B carrier, I am not contagious and would not harm my co-workers. It is unreasonable for the company to fire me," Zhang said.

According to the newly-issued Labor and Employment Law, as of this year, employers cannot reject potential employees for carrying a contagious virus. The health and labor department also announced some requirements that Hepatitis B carriers' rights be protected.

Deng, from the business department of Wm Wrigley Jr, said the company has a strict policy on employee health because the company's business is in the food industry. It also said Zhang was not qualified for any other position in the company. They made this decision after consulting with the department of food administration. Zhang is receiving Duoqi's apology and 50,000 yuan in compensation.

This is the first discrimination case from a Hepatitis B carrier in Beijing since the government implemented its new labor law, a Chaoyang Court of Justice spokesman said.

Face recognition a first in Shanghai schools

By Jackie Zhang

Shanghai's kindergartens, primary and middle schools will be getting 12,000 face recognition monitors this year as part of an 80 million yuan security investment.

Local education committee says the equipment can recognize people's faces and cars' plate numbers.

The project to improve school and kindergarten safety is part of the municipal government's plan for 2008. Four kinds of technical facilities will be installed in all schools and kindergartens: a face recognition system at the entrance, intrusion alarm, intrusion detectors and an emergency alarm switch connected to the nearest police department.

System installation will be complete by the end of the year and school security guards trained in its use.

The Shanghai school system has about 1.7 million students enrolled.

New exhibition center welcomes first display

By Li Fenghua

The International Costume and Dress Show, which starts March 28 and lasts 4 days, will be the first exhibition displayed at the New China International Exhibition Center.

There will be about 1,000 exhibitors from home and abroad to attend this show, Jin Taixi, vice president of Shunyi Commercial Bureau, said. And about 100 thousand spectators will take part in the exhibition according to the estimation.

The new exhibition center is located at Maliandian, west of Jingshun Road and close to the Capital Airport. Since it is far from downtown, services such as the communication, dining, shopping and accommodations will be available, a spokesman said.

With state of art technology, the



Security guard checks out the safety issue at the new exhibition center.

Photo by Lin Hui

new center can satisfy all kinds of exhibition needs.

It not only can be used as an exhibition center or meeting center, but it also can be a tourism spot.

There are about 100,000 square

meters divided into three parts to be used as parking lots, far surpassing the national standards for parking lots in exhibition center.

The new center can accommodate 200 cars per 10,000 square

meters can be parked in the new center, as few as 65 cars are required by the national standards.

Sockets which provide the network, communication cable plug, cold and hot water pipe links etc. are located every six meters in the 100 thousand square meter center. There are about 2,300 sockets in the new center. The technology has reached the international standard, said the person in charge from the investment and development company of the new center.

The planned area of the new center is almost 156 hectares, and the general building area is the biggest exhibition center in China.

The International Automobile Exhibition, the center's second, will be held next month from April 20 to 28.

Live debate to select four officials for promotion

By Zhang Dongya

Nanjing's municipal TV stations broadcasted a debate between sixteen candidates for four director positions in the government yesterday morning. The debate was the first time Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, allowed the public to select government officials.

The candidates, whose average age is 40, were divided into four groups, which will be narrowed down to a final four posi-

tions by public vote.

Each candidate has 15 minutes to make a presentation, after which he will answer two questions from the audience, the city's organization department said.

There are three female officials among the 16 candidates and one non-Party official.

As many as 200 delegates from government, enterprises and the public were present at the debate and all could ask the

candidates questions.

Critics said the selection method shows progress, and is respectful of public opinion.

Organizers did not reveal the topics of debate beforehand. "The above information is kept secret since we don't want to put too much pressure on the candidates," an organization department spokesman said.

More than 300 officials at the county-level or above, as well

as retired senior officials, discussed and recommended candidates for the 47 positions in February. Forty-three similar positions have already been filled.

The timetable for the announcement of the winners remains unknown as the candidates will also have to go through a series of tests with the standing committee and full session of the municipal people's congress.

**THIS PAGE HAS
BEEN LOST**

Lhasa returns to normal amid biased coverage

On March 14, Lhasa erupted in riots. Crowds beat, smashed, looted and torched. Official counts show at least 18 civilians and one police officer were killed in the chaos. Two weeks have passed, and life in Lhasa is returning to normal despite continuing skewed coverage by foreign media.

Witnesses recount riots

As many as 94 foreigners, including tourists and those who live and work in Tibet, witnessed the recent riots.

Tony Gleason, field director of the Tibet Poverty Alleviation Fund, a private American organization which helps Tibetans in everything from skill training, health to micro-finance, is among them.

Gleason said he still has to psych himself up to go out into the streets since the riots. The relief worker was left wary and alone after the March 14 riot. His wife and daughter returned to the US on March 20, and he has remained in his hotel for most of the time since.

He said he, his wife and his one-year-old daughter were dining at the Snowland Restaurant on March 14 when mobs began hurling bricks and fist-sized rocks at cars on the street.

"Wherever there were mobs, people tried to flee," Gleason said.

"I saw black smoke from the center of the city, and there was more smoke from other parts," he said. "I never saw police open fire on the mob," he added.

Gleason has worked in Tibet for three years and prides himself on being close to Tibetan culture. "I compare Lhasa to two places in the world: Mecca for Muslims and the Vatican for Catholics."

Four Western tourists who visited Tibet recounted the ferocity in a story carried by the British daily *The Times* on Wednesday.

The story, titled "They got him in the head," was down on the ground, not moving," quoted a Swiss tourist who said he witnessed the mob beating an old man who was on a bicycle.

"They were howling like wolves," Claude Balsiger said. "That was when it went insane."

He also said he saw a Canadian tourist step in to rescue a young man who was attacked by the crowd.

"They were kicking him in the ribs and his face was bleeding," he said. "But then a white man walked up ... helped him up from the ground."

"The city is returning to normal now and we are trying to get over this and continue our program," Gleason said. "I miss my wife and daughter, and hope they can come back soon."

Apologies for distortion

Two German news organizations have apologized for distorting facts in the papers' coverage of the riots.

German news television N-TV admitted Monday that a picture and a video sequence used in a March 20 report about the riots had been shot in Nepal.

It said the images were replaced after editors noticed the mistake.

On Sunday, another German television, RTL, wrote on its Web site that it "used a picture in a wrong context."



An international media delegation left Beijing for the autonomous region on Wednesday morning following more unrest in Lhasa. The Information Office of the State Council has arranged a three-day trip for the delegation, which consists of 26 journalists from 19 media

organizations from different countries and regions, such as *The Associated Press* from the US, *Financial Times* from the UK, *South China Morning Post* from Hong Kong and *Central News Agency* from Taiwan.

Xinhua Photos

In fact, the picture showed security forces in Nepal, the RTL Aktuell, a main news program of the RTL TV, said in an online statement.

"The image was taken on March 17 in the capital city of Kathmandu, where Nepalese security forces were confronting demonstrators with batons," it said.

"We have accidentally created the impression that it was a scene of unrest in Tibet with Chinese security forces involved. We regret this error," it said.

The RTL Aktuell, N-TV and the *German Bild* newspaper and the *Washington Post* were found to have used images of baton-wielding Nepalese police in clashes with protesters in Kathmandu. The papers claimed the officers were Chinese police.

CNN posted a picture on its Web site showing running in front of a military truck. The original picture uploaded by Chinese netizens also shows mobs hurling stones at the truck.

The BBC News Web site ran a photo with the caption "There is a heavy military presence in Lhasa," though the photo was of an ambulance with the Red Cross symbol.

The American Fox News Web site published a photo with the caption "Chinese troops parade handcuffed Tibetan prisoners in trucks," while the photo shows Indian police dragging a man away.

Netizens slam distortion

Chinese netizens, including students studying overseas, were incensed by the biased and dishonest reports about the riots.

"I used to think the Western media was fair, but how could they turn a blind eye to the killing and arson by rioters?" posters on huanqiu.com wrote.



Pictures from some media websites, including CNN, with untrue reports about the riots have been posted on chatrooms, drawing criticism.

"To tarnish China's image, the West is doing whatever it can: no matter how mean and vicious," a netizen on huanqiu.com wrote.

One netizen said a Canadian traveler who witnessed the riot wrote in his blog, "Those rioters assaulted civilians and policemen. This would have been cracked down on more severely if it had happened in a Western country."

The Canadian traveler also posted photographs of Chinese Armed Police building a wall of shields to defend against stones and bricks thrown by rioters.

Although the picture was published by the *New York Times* on its front page, the caption made no mention of attack

by the rioters.

"Many friends working in Western media consulted me to know more about the truth of the riot in Lhasa and sent me some media reports," Liu Na, professor with College of Journalism and Mass Medium at Wuhan University, said in an interview with *Global Times*.

"Bias and even prejudice exist in some Western media coverage about China because of old ways of thinking and different values," Liu, also a cultural scholar at the University of Birmingham, said.

Double standard

A number of foreign media have condemned the recent riots and criticized the biased reporting by some Western media.

Singapore's *Lianhe Zaobao* issued an editorial on Saturday criticizing the West for adopting a double standard on the Tibet issue. The West's ingrained arrogance toward other religions, races and civilizations is one of the major destabilizing factors in the world, it said.

The paper also carried an article saying that the riots in Lhasa were premeditated and well planned in a bid to incite public opinion in the West, provoke China and sabotage the Beijing Olympic Games. The distorted reporting by some Western media catered to such malicious attempts, it added.

The Dominion Post in New Zealand published last Sunday a reader's letter criticizing some people for being too eager to try to link what happened in Lhasa with the issues of human rights and free trade agreements, without first trying to acquaint themselves with the actual situation in Tibet.

(Agencies)

Banks allowed to trade gold futures

(Xinhua) – Chinese commercial banks will be allowed to trade gold futures in the domestic market, according to a notice released on the regulator's official Web site here this week.

China gold futures trading was launched in January, but domestic banks were barred from trading by the China Bank-

ing Regulatory Commission.

According to the notice, domestic banks that meet certain requirements, such as having capital adequacy ratio of more than 8 percent, can apply for a trading permit.

"That's great news for the gold futures market, which is not operating that well," Hu Yuyue, an

expert with Beijing Technology and Business University, said.

"Commercial banks can provide more liquidity and stability to the market, after all, they hold huge capital," said Hu.

"Gold futures trading can also help domestic banks to improve competitiveness against overseas banks as financial derivatives are

supposed to be the largest revenue sources for leading banks," he said.

Non-interest income usually accounts for at least 50 percent of bank revenues in developed countries and the proportion can reach 80 percent for some banks.

However, Chinese banks depend heavily on the margins between deposits and loans.

China steps toward Nasdaq-style exchange

By Huang Daohen

The securities regulator issued draft rules Monday for a long-planned Nasdaq-like secondary board to fund start-up companies, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported.

"The new board will serve growth companies and will focus on extending support to firms capable of independent innovation," the report said, citing the China Securities Regulatory Commission. The commission has been soliciting opinions from retail investors on the draft rules before March 31.

The board, to be located in the southern city of Shenzhen, is likely to provide more access to the capital market for domestic start-up companies, which often find it more difficult to obtain bank loans than larger companies.

Insiders say that big enterprises often get preferential treatment in capital disbursement, not just because they are financially stronger and have a better credit record, but also because they may have better connections to major banks.

However, the listing requirements for the growth enterprise board will be looser than for the existing exchanges in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Under the proposed rules, a second-board listing applicant must have been profitable in the previous two

years with net profits totaling no less than 10 million yuan (about US \$1.4 million). By contrast, candidate companies for listing in the main boards in Shanghai and Shenzhen are required to post net profits of no less than 30 million yuan in the previous three years.

Referring to worry over the launch of the second board affecting the main board by distracting capital, Yao Gang, vice chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission, said the new board won't threaten the main board but will enhance the variety of investment choices for investors.

"China's stock market is not short of funds, but of good choices for investment," Yao said during an online interview.

The time is ripe for the Nasdaq-like growth board, which is designed as an avenue for fast-growing start-up companies to raise funds, he said.

China was reported to have reserves of 40 trillion yuan (US \$5.6 trillion) in February and individual deposits increased to 18 trillion yuan, boosted by the rapid growth of investment, security and pension funds, he said.

"Capital is not a major factor deterring development of our stock market. We lack good investment products," Yao said.



The Motorola Center in Schaumburg, Illinois, US. The company's split draws wild concern. IC Photo

Motorola splits in two

By Huang Daohen

Electronics giant Motorola reported Wednesday that it will split into two stand-alone, publicly traded entities – one focused on mobile handsets and related products, and the other on voice and data communications products and services.

The split was confirmed by Motorola China yesterday. "Our Global CEO sent a mail about the split decision to all the internal staff yesterday," Che Lei, senior manager of the public relation department at the Motorola China, said, "We are now negotiating this issue with headquarters."

The decision follows Motorola's January announcement that it was evaluating the structural and strategic realignment of its businesses. How the move would affect its local work force, which has dwindled from thousands to 650 employees in Arizona, was not immediately available.

UUSee.com joins self-discipline pact

By Huang Daohen

The UUSee.com, a multimedia Web site, signed the Pact of Self-discipline on Visual-Audio Programs and Services of the Internet, which urges domestic Web sites to spread positive, "healthy" programs and boycott corrupt or outdated ones.

The move follows eight other central network medias, including People.com and Xinhua net, which signed the pact in late February. They were the first batch of private companies to join the pact.

It calls for respect and protection of the legal rights and

interests of the copyright holders and multimedia service providers. An information-sharing and mutual assistance mechanism must be set up for online multimedia, it said.

"All Web site companies must abide by the country's laws, regulations and policies on the development and management of Internet culture and boycott programs that advocate violence, pornography, gambling and terror," Xu Haoyu, the vice-president of UUSee.com, said.

It was a win-win situation for the online multimedia industry and authorities to join forces for

a healthy industry environment, Xu said.

The private companies' joining in the pact shows that the clearing of circumstance and the marketing concepts of the entire online multimedia industry improved to a higher level, experts said. More private companies' joining may promote the development of the entire internet and would purify this field, Xu said.

Since 2006, UUSee.com has cooperated with as many as 80 mainstream TV stations, including CCTV.

The Web site focuses on national important events and

social issues. It has cooperated with CCTV for the network's Spring Festival Evening for live broadcast since 2006. In 2007, it broadcast the 17th National Congress of CRC and ChangE's flight to the moon. Last year, it had reported the whole course of NPC and CPPCC.

Besides, the UUSee.com also presented some topic themed activities. For instance, early this year, it broadcast the online "Power of Moral – National Commendation of Moral Models." As many as 2 million viewers watched online show during the time.

China Life buys Visa shares

(Wall Street Journal) – China Life Insurance Company said it bought US \$300 million of shares in Visa's initial public offering, marking the biggest investment in the US stock market to date by a Chinese insurer.

China Life also said its 2007 net profit nearly doubled on robust growth in insurance premiums and strong investment gains.

Investors are likely to view the stake purchase as a positive move by China Life to diversify its portfolio, analysts said. The firm, China's biggest life insurer by premiums, posted a paper gain of around \$108 million on its investment, given a 36 percent jump in Visa's shares since its IPO was launched.

The credit-card giant raised nearly US \$20 billion this month in the largest IPO in the US, after selling 447 million new shares at \$44 each. Shares of Visa, which began trading last Wednesday, closed at US \$59.73 on the New York Stock Exchange Monday.

China Life's purchase of Visa shares follows stake purchases by other Chinese companies, but those have not fared as well.

Minsheng loses in overseas investment

By Huang Daohen

Minsheng Banking, the nation's first privately-owned bank, lost 300 million yuan on its overseas investments this week, *Beijing Times* reported.

As of press time, Minsheng Bank's overseas acquisition target UCBH has dropped to around US \$9 per share on the New York Stock Exchange, from Minsheng's initial purchase price about US \$18.

Minsheng made its first overseas purchase last October, a 5 percent stake in UCBH. Minsheng now holds 5.4 million UCBH stock shares. The lender aims to double the UCBH stake this year and raise it to 20 percent by June 2009.

Minsheng Bank said earlier that it held US \$10 million of securities backed by US subprime loans at the end of last year.

Tom Group posts loss as Internet sales decline

(Bloomberg) – Tom Group, the media company controlled by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing, posted its first annual loss in five years after sales to Chinese customers fell. The company's chief executive resigned.

The net loss was HK \$297 million (US \$38 million), compared with a profit of HK \$32 million a year earlier, the Hong Kong-based company said. Sales from continuing operations as a provider of phone ringtones and music downloads fell to HK\$2.68 billion from HK\$2.8 billion.

The company's shares have declined 71 percent since Tommei Tong was appointed chief executive in 2006 as mobile operators China Mobile and China Unicom tightened access to their customers. The government asked the wireless operators to review ways of reducing unwanted advertisements.

"Tom Online's wireless business was seriously impacted by the changes in regulations and related mobile-operator policies," Tom Group said.

Planning a heist, student-style

By Han Manman

Secretarial students at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies recently were asked to plan a bank robbery for an assignment.

The assignment involved teams of five or six students, with each team having to make its own presentation within seven minutes.

They also had to come up with a plan of action for their team comprised of a leader, a safecracker, a driver, two robbers and a gunman, according to the *Information Times*.

Professor He, who came up with the assignment, says it's aimed at teaching students how to allocate resources economically and efficiently.

"We've never taken an assignment as seriously as this one. On our team, each person came up with a plan, and we picked the best one. We even timed ourselves on the college grounds," one student said.

Comment

Adopted from Harvard Business School

Students majoring in the arts usually do not have training in deliberate thinking that students majoring in science do. So this exercise trains their thinking ability.

The assignment is what I learned from Harvard Business School. I don't think the assignment will encourage students to rob a bank for real. They're adults, and know what's right and wrong.

— Professor He, local teacher

Popular professor

He is the most creative teacher I've ever met. He gave me lessons on writing when I was a freshman and sophomore. What I want to say is that he is the only teacher in the university who made the class exciting! It is totally unfair to see

him in a negative light. He has done nothing wrong!

There is also no student who would actually carry out the plan for real! Everyone knows it is illegal to rob a bank! It is ridiculous to assume that the teacher actually is planning on robbing a bank. All he is doing is collecting ideas.

— Shadowkwok, a student from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Bad effect on students

To simply assume that "adults know what's right and wrong" is absolutely wrong. In recent years, students have frequently committed crimes. Although college students are highly educated, they are immature and weak-willed, with the heavy pressures of society on them. They may easily turn to crime.

— Zhang Chengcai, reporter

US has same problem

I can understand the purpose for this exercise. It would require quite a bit of higher order thinking to complete such a task. But as a US teacher, I would really have to fight to justify this kind of assignment to parents and administrators.

— Wolf Dreamer, US teacher

Morals must rule

This has transformed a simple educational tool into a moral issue. As a new teaching method, the assignment is fine. The teacher wants to evoke the students' enthusiasm for the class, and we have already seen the results from the students' active participation. However, the method lies outside the bounds of academic morals or ethics.

— Su Shaoxin, a critic

Mao's former sedan discarded as waste



By Li Fenghua

The nation's first sedan, a Red-Flag CA 72, once Mao's private sedan produced in 1959 by First Automobile Works, was discarded at the Guangzhou Library for many years and now is treated as waste.

The CA72 was made to celebrate the ten years ceremony of the new establishment of the People's Republic of China. There were 10 CA72s produced that year and almost all produced by hand. There were only 202 of them produced. Production ended in 1963. Most of the important parts of the car such as the steering wheel and the license plate were stolen.

Xinhua Photo

Costly symbolic city stirs citizens

By Huang Daohen

A cultural project costing 30 billion yuan (US \$4.2 billion) to be built in Jining City of Shandong province, home of ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, has sparked heated debate recently after a political advisor addressed the proposal at the annual congress.

The project "Chinese Cultural Symbolic City," a bid to revive traditional values, was initiated by 69 academicians in 2004

and approved by the National Development and Reform Commission last October, Xinhua reported.

Project organizers will begin soliciting design proposals worldwide for the plan, but insiders stated that a memorial hall to Confucius and monuments to other memorable Chinese figures from the past should be included.

The city will incorporate the ancient city of Qufu, ancestral home of Confucius,

and nearby Zoucheng, home of the later Confucian philosopher Mencius, with a mountain range between them.

It would also celebrate Chinese technical breakthroughs from paper-making to recent successes such as the launch of a lunar probe, Xinhua reported.

"No culture can survive without the matrix in which it was born," Xu Jialu, the project initiator, said.

"The traditional Chinese culture is part of

the Chinese identity, and we need to bring that back in the face of an increasingly superficial and chaotic world," Xu said.

Construction is expected to begin by 2010, he said.

However, the project has been widely questioned and criticized by the public since the news was released earlier this month. Referring to the controversial 30 billion yuan investment, the organizer denied that the estimate amount on its Web site was official.

Comment

Keep tradition alive

Our primary aim is not to build houses or ritual architectures for worship. We want to arouse our nation's consciousness, in an attempt to treasure and protect our national spirit.

— Gao Shuqun, a former Ji'ning government official

Bad choice of builders

Scientists may not be the right people

to propose the construction of such a city. I don't know of any historians who have spoken in support of the project, and I really think that the government should release a list of who the 69 scientists are.

— Liu Qingzhu, archaeologist

Out with the old

I don't think the Culture Symbolic City will do much to change Chinese con-

temporary thinking. It will just create another tourist attraction.

Confucius's teaching had its heyday in China and is now outdated. The basic principle of blind loyalty to the senior cannot solve the problems facing modern China. More new ideas are needed instead of reviving old relics.

— Jimmy, college students

Yet another theme park

Another tacky theme park on the way.

Given the information currently available, people may reasonably suspect that Ji'ning City simply wants to launch a huge development project to improve local tourist facilities under the guise of cultural renaissance.

— Rory, netizen

Battle ends with Elisabeth's exit



Elisabeth Loisel CFP Photo

By Han Manman

The battle between China's women's soccer coach Elisabeth Loisel and the China Football Association (CFA) has come to an end after she officially confirmed Tuesday evening that she will not lead the football team after its disastrous performance at the Algarve Cup in southern Portugal earlier this month.

Veteran women football coach Shang Ruihua will replace Elisabeth Loisel of France to help revive the slumping national team before the Beijing Games.

CFA sent Loisel an email terminating her contract on Sunday,

bringing an end to 35 days of chaos within the team.

The email, issued under CFA vice chairman Xie Yalong, said that neither Loisel, who had returned to her hometown in France, nor her training group need come back to China. The contract has been effectively terminated. Loisel will be paid compensation as outlined in her contract.

"It is impossible for us to continue the commitment of your contract, and we are sorry to inform you that you do not have to come back to China and coach the team again," the email said.

The electronic message also

expressed hopes that the contract dispute could be settled in a "peaceful" and "friendly" way.

However, Loisel expressed doubts about the email's authenticity, insisting she and her coaching staff should come to China to assess the situation themselves.

"There is no signature and no stamp (on the email). I have no idea about its credibility," the coach, who has been in deep water with Chinese officials for several weeks, said. "As I did not receive the official decision about my future, I will fly to Beijing according to my original schedule."

The events suddenly took an

awkward turn one Tuesday night. Elisabeth said in France that she finally accepted CFA's decision and compensation. She also canceled her plans to return to China.

Loisel did try to stay in touch with the CFA while she was in France following China's terrible showing at the Algarve Cup earlier this month and submitted her own training list.

She was the seventh head coach and the second foreign coach for China in four years. The first foreign coach was Loisel's predecessor Marika Domanski-Lyfors.

Music masters talk on chamber music

By Gan Tian

Rainer Kussmaul, violinist, Wolfgang Boettcher, cellist, and Eduard Brunner, clarinetist, were invited by Goethe Institute China and Ernst von Siemens (EVS) Music Foundation to give classes on chamber music and perform in the Central Conservatory of Music.

The trio arrived Tuesday and gave seven-day classes on their specialties and chamber music. Students from the conservatory enjoyed their lessons on romantic and impressionistic music. On March 24 and 25, the graduates gave two closing concerts at the Concert Hall of the Central Conservatory. The finale was an interpretation of Olivier Messiaen's "Quatuor pour la fin du Temps," presented from the three renowned musicians together with Chinese pianist Shi Jiajia.

Boettcher was impressed with the outstanding skill and musical intelligence of the students: "Some of them should be invited to German conservatories for a learning exchange."

Kussmaul, the 62-year old violinist, came to teach for a second time. "Same weather, but better students," he said. Last year, he taught "Vivace," a quartet, in the conservatory, and this year he met again. "They have made much progress since I was last here," the violinist said.

Xie Xin, the translator in Kuss-



Rainer Kussmaul, violinist, Wolfgang Boettcher, cellist, and Eduard Brunner, clarinetist, (left to right) performed at the Central Conservatory of Music. Photo by Gan Tian

maul's class said, "All of the students were amazed that he was so nice and warm-hearted." What impressed the students most was they were all very responsible. "It is a tiring job, but they all appear on time, listen carefully to every sound the students made, and point out the mistakes. I think they are more responsible than some professors at home," Xie said.

Their classes were humorous. "Kussmaul would make a pose like 'I am going to pinch your neck' if he heard some wrong keys," Xie said.

"Though there are many Chinese musicians walking to the international stage, most of them are doing it solo. Chamber music is only a start, and they have a long way to go," Kussmaul said.

This year, the classes were

focusing more on classic and romantic music. "We plan to continue the chamber music master class next year, and will pay more attention on contemporary musical works in next year's program," Wang Lei, EVS Music Foundation's spoke person, said.

Kussmaul was the first Concert Master of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and is now the profes-

sor at the Freiburg Music Conservatory. Boettcher was the Principal Cello of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and now professor at the Hochschule der Kuenste Berlin. Brunner was the first Clarinet of the Munich's Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and currently the professor at the Hochschule fuer Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Saarbruecken.

French conductor plays to childlike hearts

By He Jianwei

"The audiences will understand this opera, if they watch it with an unsophisticated and childlike heart," Michel Plasson, the conductor of the French opera, *Le Roi d'Ys* (*The King of Ys*), said Monday at the National Grand Theater.

Plasson, 75, the French senior conductor, is well known for his interpretations of French opera, particularly those of Gounod and Massenet. He will conduct the classic French opera, *Le Roi d'Ys*, which will run from April 3 to 6 at the National Grand Theater.

Plasson arrived in Beijing on March 21. After he disembarked from the plane, Plasson participated in rehearsal with the symphony orchestra and chorus at the Central Opera Theater.

After the rehearsal with the orchestra and chorus, he was satisfied with the Central Opera Theater's performance. "According to the schedule made before I came to China, there were only three days for us to rehearse. I worried that would not be enough time. But after I met the orchestra and chorus, I was surprised that they had good capability for cooperation and understanding," Plasson said.

He said they only took a day and a half to finish the rehearsal. "It guaranteed more time for us to make it better and perfect," he said.

Plasson believes the music is a language beyond national boundaries. "Although it was difficult for the Chinese actors and chorus to sing in French, they finally conquered the language handi-

cap because they understood the music and mastered the language," he said.

He emphasized the music cannot be expressed by any kind of colloquial speech. "I hope the audience will enjoy the beautiful music and forget the language barriers. I will give further direction to the actors and chorus for their understanding of the lyrics and their pronunciation," he said.

The opera, composed by Lalo, premiered in 1888. Due to its complex staging requirements, the last two performances were held 23 years apart, in 1984 and 2007.

"The story is based on a Breton legend, describing jealousy, love, death and war. Lalo's music is full of passion to express the scenes of war and love," he said.



Michel Plasson

Photo provided by National Grand Theater

Olympics' worldwide IT partner takes up the Games challenge



Patrick Adiba is confident about the Beijing Games.
Photos provided by Atos Origin

By He Jianwei

"Beijing's Olympic Games will not only take place in Beijing, but also in six other cities. Compared with previous Games, it is a bigger challenge for us," Patrick Adiba, 46, Executive Vice President of Olympics and Major Events in Atos Origin, said Wednesday, 135 days before the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Atos Origin is the Worldwide Information Technology Partner for the Olympic Games. As lead integrator, project manager and IT operations manager, he is responsible for the entire IT infrastructure of the Games, focusing on the area of security and risk management, as well as providing two major systems, namely Games Management Systems (GMS) and Information

Diffusion Systems (IDS).

Adiba said more than 10,000 athletes will compete in seven cities and in more than 70 competition and non-competition venues. "The challenge is to flawlessly capture and bring this event to billions of television and Internet customers using innovative media applications," he said.

Origin will lead a team of 4,000 IT experts serving the Games. Most of them are Chinese IT professionals. "We also have an internship program from which we selected 100 students from China's top universities. They might be the future engineers in China," he said.

Origin began making preparations for the Olympics in 2003. Key officials and technicians from China were then present during

the Athens 2004 Olympic Games.

"We have spent more than 200,000 hours testing from July 2007, which began with the Good Luck Beijing test events. In the coming months, we will have two technical rehearsals," he said.

During the test events, Adiba praised China's preparation of the equipment and venues. He worked with the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City in 2002 and Torino in 2006. "It is the first time that the host country has prepared so well both the equipment and venues one year in advance of the Games," he said.

He has participated in three Games. "During the events, problems occurred every minute. We were always making decisions," he said.

Adiba made a simple cal-

ulation, "three to five events occurred per second. There may not have been any problems, but we had to be prepared to discuss and make decisions as soon as possible," he said.

Adiba believes that technology has helped with the development of the Olympic Games. He said, in Barcelona 1992, it was the first time that a PC was used in the Games; in Atlanta 1996, the first Internet website was used.

For the Beijing Games, a wireless INFO service, an internet that is available to accredited media and the Olympic Family of athletes and IOC officials, will be available for the first time in the Olympic Games. The service will allow all the journalists to navigate through INFO2008 from their own laptop via a wireless network.

Artist unveils secret of Hermès



Kamel Hamadou, master scarf printer, demonstrates the process of printing.

Photo provided by Ruder Finn

By He Jianwei

Master of scarf printer Kamel Hamadou, 48, from Lyon, France, demonstrated scarf printing and unveiled the secret of Hermès' scarves Tuesday morning in front of a Hermès' store at the China World Trade Center.

Hamadou illustrated the process of making scarves and printed two scarves. From March 25 to 30, he will demonstrate the printing process four times each day.

Workers take 18 months to make a Hermès scarf, including the design, color matching,

plate making printing and washing time.

Hamadou put two white, silk scarves on a sturdy 4-meter-long bench. "In Lyon's workshop, we work on a 120-meter-long bench to make 100 scarves at once," he said.

Printing a scarf requires several plates. The number of the plates is decided by the variety of colors. "Each scarf usually has 30 colors. We have a scarf with the patterns of pencils with 42 different colors, which is the most colors we have ever used," he said.

Hamadou has printed scarves for 20 years after an 8-year appren-

ticeship. "A print worker will serve a two to four-year apprenticeship before he or she can print silk scarves. He or she will take another four years before he or she print the Kashmir scarf," he said.

There was no school for print workers in Lyon. All the Hermès print workers are trained from generation to generation. "There is no secret to acquiring the skills of printing, but relying on the worker's eyes, hands and experience," he said.

The order of printing follows the colors printed on the scarf. The bench has a heat system beneath

the bench to speed up dry time. "The smallest colored points dry the fastest," he said.

Hamadou treats his work as his life. "If a scarf will take two years to make, then I will use the full two years. Quality requires time," he said.

Lyon is regarded as the traditional home of French silk and Hermès' silk operations. "The silk is made by Hermès itself," he said.

After printing, the silk lengths steam bathed at 103 C for an hour, after which they are washed and conditioned.

Chinese drama's foreign faces

By Gan Tian

The Chinese drama *Tianchao 1900*, The Heaven Dynasty in 1900, will make its debut at the National Center for Performing Arts starting April 15. However, there are three foreign faces appearing in this ancient Beijing-themed drama.

Christian Edwards, Australian, Vene Vieitez, Spanish, and Lee Kramer, German, will appear in the drama. "I am kind of a good guy, but Vene plays a soldier, and Kramer is some kind of German translator," Edward introduced their roles in the play.

Edwards was working for an English magazine called China International Business last year, but he quit and came to work with the cast last Christmas. Vieitez and Kramer are both full-time students at Beijing University. They accidentally heard about an open audition for the drama, and were selected by the famous local director Wang Yinli.

"It's a completely different experience for me," Edwards said, "it is very challenging." The three actors are required to speak some Chinese, which will be the toughest task.

Edward, who has been in China for five years, thought it was okay for him, but Vieitez and Kramer have only been here for six months. "My Chinese is seriously poor," Vieitez said, "but the luckiest thing is the cast has great patience with us." The actors will have to be in rehearsal for about eight hours per day.

Vieitez has performed in theaters in Italy and Spain before. Compared with the foreign theaters and dramas, Vieitez thought here that the organization of the rehearsal was totally different. "It focuses much more on bigger scenes," Vieitez said. Choreography for 50 people, beautiful backgrounds and more delicate dressings, surprised them all.

As this drama tells a story happening during the Qing Dynasty when foreign countries were invading China, it gives more perspectives on which to judge the history. For Kramer who is majoring in international studies, it was a good opportunity for him to better understand the relationship between China and the world at that time.

UN protects a living Yangtze

By Han Manman

The new UN program Water School for a Living Yangtze began last Friday in Beijing as part of the UN's greater Water for Life program.

Current statistics indicate that the Yangtze accounts for 60 percent of China's pollution and is

the single largest source of marine pollution in the Pacific Ocean. Increasing levels of pollution in the Yangtze pose a serious threat to communities and ecosystems that depend on it for survival.

The water school is an educational initiative being implemented in three pilot sites along

the river: Shangri-la, Sichuan and Shanghai. Its goal is to restore the ecological integrity of the Yangtze River through effective public participation in sustainable water resource management.

Activities include developing water school teaching material, training teachers and fostering

and supporting community action. As many as 10,000 students will be involved in the first three years of the program.

The "Water school for a living Yangtze" is a component of the International Water School Program initiated in Austria by Swarovski.

Danwei's plenary session held on Tuesday

By Li Fenghua

Danwei, a Web site founded in 2003, held its second plenary session Wednesday at Song, a new popular nightlife venue.

The discussion started at 7:30 pm and about 100 people from varied fields, mostly foreigners, attended.

Speakers such as Steven Lin, an Olympic news editor at Sohu.com, Jonathan Watts from *The Guardian*, Raymond Zhou, a movie critic, and columnist and Lindsey Hilsum, International news editor for Britain's Channel 4 News and the current China correspondent, were invited to lead the discussion.

CNN's Beijing Bureau chief and correspondent, Jaime A. FlorCruz, was on the list but he could not attend due to sudden reporting commitments.

The discussion began with the topic of western news coverage of China with the upcoming Olympics. Such questions as the fairness of Western news coverage, how biased some news coverage

is and the effects of new media, such as blogs, TV news, newspapers and other traditional media were discussed.

The Western speakers expressed their views about their coverage and the Chinese government's policy.

Speakers also shared their experience of reporting in China.

Many audience members hoped for better provision of statistics during media reporting, Watts, from *The Guardian*, suggested looking for more resources.

"This generation has more channels through which to speak their mind than any other generation. They should feel happier than any other," Raymond Zhou said.

The discussion went on for about one hour and was followed by cocktails, snacks and networking. Danwei will hold another event in April.

More about danwei

Danwei is a Web site about media, advertising and urban life in China. With frequent refer-

ences to and translations from Chinese mainland media, Danwei publishes fresh information and produces videos and audio podcasts about China.

Using extensive Chinese language sources and keeping tabs on a wide variety of subjects from legal and business stories to media and entertainment gossip to the environment, Danwei provides foreigners local news.

The Chinese word "Danwei" means "unit," as in a unit of currency or measurement, or as in "work unit" – the old term for a state-owned company that was supposed to provide cradle-to-grave employment, housing and medical treatment.

The founder, Jeremy Goldkorn is a native of South Africa, now the editor-in-chief and publisher, came to China as early as 1995. He has lived in a workers dormitory, ridden a bicycle across Xinjiang and Tibet, and spent the last decade working in the Chinese media, advertising and Internet industries.



The second Danwei plenary session at Song. Photo by Marie Wennberg

Event

Booktalk: How China Is Winning the Tech Race

International business journalist Rebecca Fannin will share her observations from the frontlines of China's technological rebirth, from the first "technopreneurs" who created Chinese versions of Google, eBay, YouTube and MySpace to an enterprising new generation of innovators with cutting-edge ideas.

Where: The Bookworm, Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: March 31, 7:30pm
Tel: 6586 9507

Making tiger-head shoes

The tiger-head shoes have long been a traditional good luck symbol for babies in China as the tiger was thought to scare away bad luck allowing children to grow up to be big and strong. These adorable handmade shoes are perfect for bringing some good luck into one's home. They make the perfect decorative accent in baby's room, or for baby to wear. Attendees will learn to make the shoes entirely from cloth and

the toe-caps are formed into a tiger's head.

Where: Chinese Culture Club, Kent Center, No 29 Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 5, 2-5 pm

Cost: 150 yuan

Tel: 6432 9341

Seminar: How to find and keep the right talented people for foreign companies

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce will organize an inspiring learning and organiza-

tional development seminar. Kai Martinsen from Thomas International China, an expert with training and consulting services will share his experiences and give advice on how to hire and retain the right kind of people for many specific work areas.

Where: Ballroom 1, Radisson SAS Hotel, A 6 Donglu, North Three Ring Road, Chaoyang District

When: April 8, 7:45-10 am

Cost: 100 yuan per person for members, 300 yuan per person for non-members

Tel: 5922 3388 ext 313

Seminar: Protection system for teenagers in social changes

Save the Children and the Institute of Social Development and Public Policy in Beijing Normal University will have a seminar on laws and regulations about teenagers' rights in China, especially how to protect kidnapped and street children.

Where: Yingdong Building, Beijing Normal University, 19, Xijiekou Wai Dajie, Haidian District

When: April 1, 9 am – 5:20 pm

(By He Jianwei)

7

Debate



Eastern and western viewpoints meet here



洋腔论见

文化差异的碰撞与融合



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7

Debate

BEIJING TODAY

City museums now offer free admission

By Huang Daohen

Admission to 33 of the city's museums is free for the public starting today, with many requiring visitors to reserve free tickets in advance, the administration of the city's cultural heritage said on Monday.

This batch of free museums include public museums and memorial halls belonging to municipal or district cultural and heritage protection departments, as well as patriotic educational bases at municipal level, Kong Fanzhi, head of the Beijing Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage said.

Upper limit

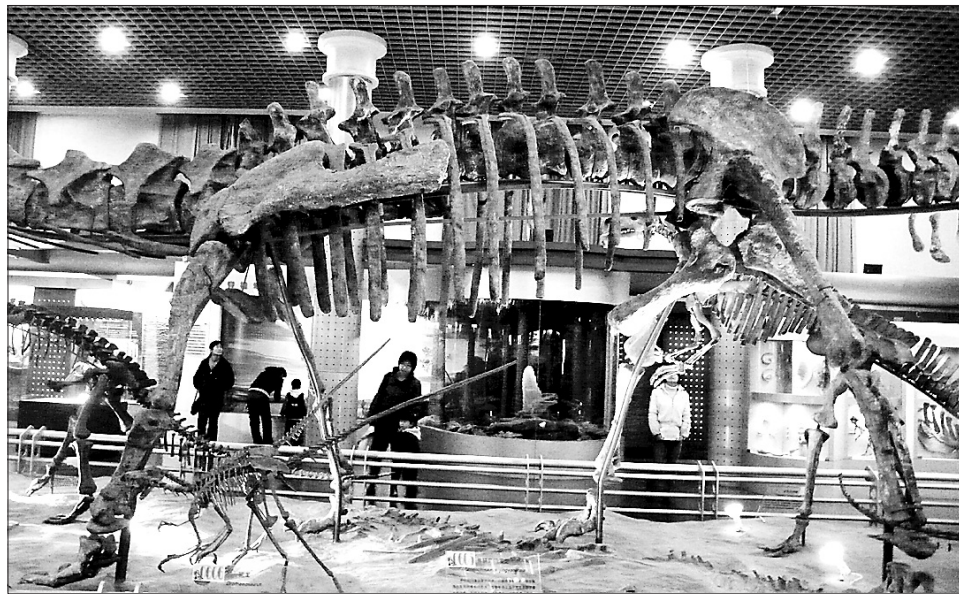
Many of the museums have taken new measures this time to prevent chaos brought on by the expected visitor boom. Most of the 33 museums will impose an upper limit for visitors every day by distributing only a certain number of tickets, Kong said.

The Capital Museum, one of the favorites, will require visitors to book tickets in advance using their real names.

"The daily people capacity of the museum is 3,000. Visitors should bring their ID cards to get free tickets," Han Yong, the museum's deputy curator, said.

Chinese culture authorities planned to open 500 public museums free to visitors this year in its drive to give taxpayers better access to culture. However, the problems at the Fujian Provincial Museum in March have shown that the museum was ill-prepared for such a volume of visitors.

Quite a few exhibits, including an elephant specimen, were damaged,



Beijing Nature Museum is free for parents and children on the weekends now. Photo by Cai jihui

Xinhua reported.

Four museum openings stalled

The public opening of four museums including the Beijing Museum of Natural History and the China Great Wall Museum will be postponed due to the internal renovation and road reconstruction.

They are expected to open free between May and July, Kong said.

Historical architectures and sites like the Forbidden City are not on the list of free admission venues, he added.

In addition, some temporary exhibitions and special shows organized by the museum are still charging admission fees. Visitors who need the audio interoperation service have to rent audio guides.

Avoid peak hours

Visitors should "do some homework" before going to the museums, Kong said.

"Visitors are better to collect information on each museum and its reservation situation through their Web sites, then choose the proper museum to visit according to one's own

interest," he said.

Kong noted that there will be expected visitor peaks during the early stages of the museums' free admission offer and holidays, and visitors are better to visit the museums some time later.

Kong suggested that older people who have retired and have lots of time should avoid weekends and holidays while visiting the museums.

In addition, as most museums lack ample parking, Kong suggested visitors choose the public transport system.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

I plan to work in Shijingshan district and would prefer to live closer to work. Could you give me some information such as quality and price of apartments, entertainment venues including bars and music, restaurants, shopping (groceries and home items), gyms, and how these compare to other districts. I am somewhat familiar with Chaoyang.

Shijingshan district is far away from downtown. But the air is cleaner and it is not as crowded as Chaoyang. You can take the subway to go wherever you want to go. The rent is cheaper. For bars, you can go to Haidian, not far from Shijingshan, and lots of musical festivals are held in Haidian every year.

Does anyone know where I can get the cheapest ticket for departure this week to New York City (NYC) or Los Angeles? I've always used ctrip, but not am having much luck this time. Any suggestion?

You can try elong.com or expedia.com. And you can also check out the fare to Chicago. It's more or less in between NYC and LA with direct flights.

I heard that apartment rent in Beijing will rise dramatically during the Olympic Games. Many landlords will break their contracts and rent the apartments to tourists four to five times of what they are now. Is that true?

Some apartments around the main Olympic venues are getting much more expensive. As far as we know, some companies have to pay such high rent for their employees because they are working very closely with the Games, such as news agencies staff members and venue workers.

However, local real estate agencies said it is not a wise idea for most landlords in Beijing to increase their rent without full consideration. For example, most apartments cannot offer the high-quality service to attract tourists to pay. Also, Beijing is very big and there are many options for tenants. The Games only lasts two weeks.

I am planning to go to Dalian on April 4, but some people said the beach would be too cold. Is it possible to enjoy the beach at that time?

It is too cold to go now. It's still about 10 degrees, not to mention the much lower temperature of the ocean.

(By Li Fenghua)

Biggest sport park opens in Chaoyang Park

By Han Manman

Li-Ning Sports Park, the biggest civic sports park in China, officially opened at the east gate of Chaoyang Park this week and most activities are free.

The sport service offers 200 meters of skating road, football fields, basketball courts and many ping pong tables.

At the same time, Li-Ning, the country's biggest sports company, launches their Heroes Van 2008 China Tour campaign.

Two converted trucks will shuttle throughout China over the next nine months covering more than 80 cities in China to promote the healthy and sporty lifestyle.

The two vans are like "sports museums" on wheels. The vehicles contain nearly 30 square meters of space and will present exhibitions on Olympic knowledge and the stories behind some Olympic legends will also be explained to visitors using the latest high-tech multimedia. As well, traditional exhibitions will be on display.

Li-Ning Heroes Van is also a running a "Mini Games." One side of the vehicles can be unfolded and made into a temporary stage.

Call 6503 0179 for detailed information or reservation.

Luxury train to Lhasa hits the rails after the Games

By Han Manman

Luxury passenger train service from Beijing to Lhasa, Tibet Autonomous Region, will hit the rails on September 1 and the train will begin accepting bookings starting this week.

The train will be "the most luxurious train in the world" priced US \$5,500 for four and five day journeys from Beijing to Lhasa and US\$4,125 from Lhasa to Beijing, Tangula Luxury Train Company said. Another route between Beijing and Lijiang, Yunnan Province will begin this October with a ticket price of US \$5,000 per single and US \$3,750 from Lijiang to Beijing. Passengers under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult.

The company said the charge includes three meals a day, a scenic spots ticket and a staff service fee. However, high class wine, liquor or health care service items are an extra charge.

The interior of the train will be decorated according to the standards of a five-star hotel. Each train will have 12 passenger cars, two dining cars and a sight-seeing car. Each passenger car will have four



The train passes Tanggulan Mountain, which is higher than 5,200 meters above sea level.

Photo by 21Century Business Herald

suites featuring a double bed, a living room, free mini-bar, in-room entertainment system with music, TV and satellite Internet plus a safe-deposit box and bathing facilities.

A 24-hour butler is on call throughout the journey, and a doctor is available during the ascent to Lhasa. On all routes there are daily off-train excursions. The train will stop at every important scene and provide a local guide for passengers. The food is managed by the Kempinski Hotel group

and all the dishes will be cooked at the scene.

According to the company, the luxury train will be unveiled to the public this June.

The project, approved by the Ministry of Railways in November, is operated by Tangula Luxury Train Company.

The 1,956-kilometer Qinghai-Tibet line, running from Xi'ning, Qinghai Province, to Lhasa, started operation in July 2006.

For more information or register, contact 5809 5328

Works of oracles

A Chinese artist navigates the divide be

If he was not wearing a name tag reading “Huang Yongping” at the press conference, people would hardly have known he was the artist. If he did not speak fluent French, people would not imagine he was a man living in France for almost 20 years. Wearing a floppy jacket, a pair of oversized glasses and a pair of dusty old shoes, Huang – who didn’t look like the “successful overseas Chinese artist” that local people are used to – talked about his first retrospective in his motherland with succinct and profound words.

House of Oracles: A Huang Yongping Retrospective opened on March 22 at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA). The first retrospective of the Chinese-born, Paris-based artist originated at the Walker Art Center, in Minneapolis, US, and was shown at MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts and the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, before traveling to its final venue, UCCA in Beijing.

Huang Yongping, born in 1954 in Xiamen, Fujian Province, immigrated to Paris in 1989, and has been living and working there ever since. He formed the Xiamen Dada group in 1986, which is considered one of the first groups among post-modern works in Chinese art and credited for opening new channels for other Chinese artists.

Since his participation in the seminal exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* at the Center Georges Pompidou in 1989, Huang has lived and worked in Paris and exhibited extensively around the world. His work was shown in 1999 with Jean-Pierre Bertrand’s in the French national pavilion during the Venice biennale in Italy.

Famous for his extravagant large-scale installations, the exhibition of *House of Oracles* features more than 40 works, including a monumental sculpture that positions a snarling tiger atop an elephant, a 40-meter-long wooden python skeleton and the re-creation of a Beaux Arts-style bank using 20 tons of sand.

Walking into the exhibiting hall, the viewers will see the monumental sculpture “11 June 2002 – The Nightmare of George V.” The sculpture of a disturbingly realistic, life-sized elephant with a tiger climbing onto a seat perched on the elephant’s back is made out of concrete, reinforced steel and covered in cowhide and rabbit fur. The seat, resting on a huge fabric cushion, is made of wood and cane and is emblazoned with the British royal crest.

In 1911, when George V visited Nepal, he hunted in the jungle seated on an elephant. In three days, while protected by bodyguards, He shot four tigers. When Huang visited a museum at Bristol in Great Britain, he found a specimen of a tiger with the label, “Given by George V.”

“The history of nature and animal specimens have a strong relationship with political history, so I attached a crest with the British royal symbol. The date, June 11, 2002, was the opening day of contemporary art in Art Basel,” Huang said.

Passing by the sculpture, there are two passages to follow to get to other parts of the exhibition. Huang puts his installation “Passage” in these two passages.

This installation consists of two large cages containing lion faces and decomposing bones positioned below airport immigration signs reading “national” and “others.” The museum visitor must choose a door to walk through, as one would at an airport; but whichever choice is made, the visitor is confronted with the animal cages containing the scent of the lions.

The idea for the installation came out of Huang’s experiences traveling the EU. For him, going through passport control and having to choose between “EU Nationals” and “Others” gave rise to questions about identity-notions of “us” and “them.”

After the lion cage, viewers will see a bank made of sand. The huge sculpture called “Bank of Sand, Sand of Bank,” is a re-creation of the Shanghai branch of the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation.

It is made out of sand mixed with a small amount of concrete, and was created by pouring this mixture into enormous molds. As the sculpture dries during the period of the exhibition, it slowly begins to crumble and disintegrate.

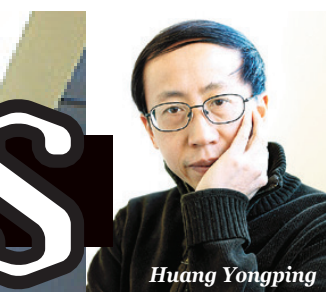
The Shanghai bank was built in 1923 during the peak of the British Empire’s colonial activities. After 1949, it became the Shanghai Municipal Government Building. In the 1990s, the building once more became a bank, one that is a major investor in Shanghai’s new economic development.

In this work, Huang tries to transcend the naivety of anti-colonialism through the slow disintegration of a sand and concrete mold during the exhibition’s run.

To the east of the bank, a large, military tent was erected



June 11, 2002 –



Huang Yongping

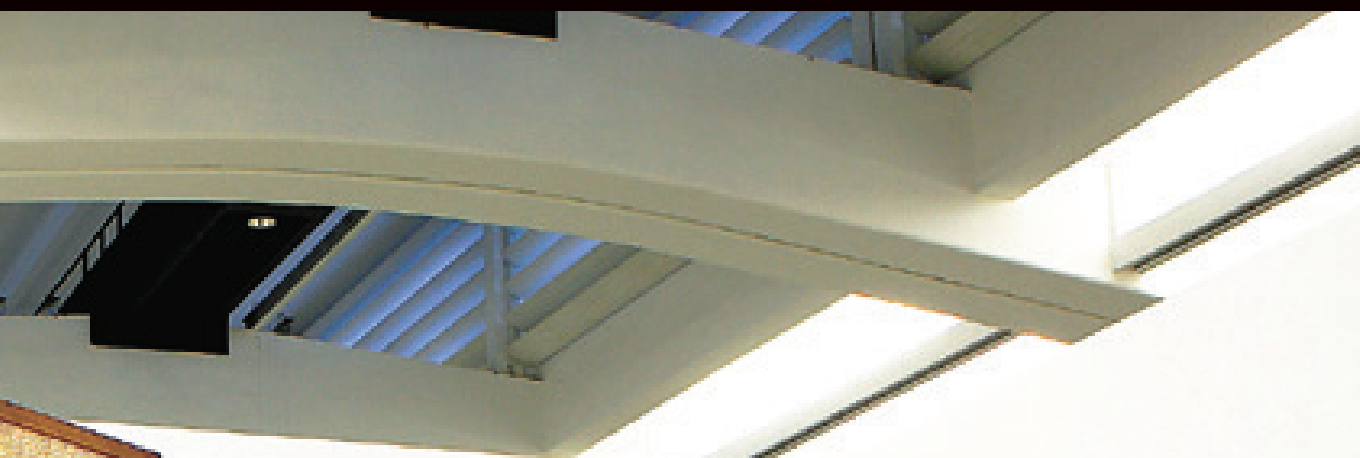
By He Jianwei

It is a house of oracles, filled with a divination table, an eight-diagram chart and ancient divination books. It is a theater of animals, containing snakes, scorpions and bats: alive or stuffed. This is the first retrospective of Huang Yongping, one of the most influential contemporary Chinese artists working overseas. Showcasing paintings, drawings and sculptural installations, the exhibition celebrates an artist whose work elegantly traverses the divide between East and West, tradition and the avant-garde.



Huang creates works using the divination system.

between East and West, tradition and the avant-garde

The Nightmare of George V
Photos provided by UCCA

“The history of nature and animal specimens have a strong relationship with political history, so I attached a crest with the British royal symbol. The date, June 11, 2002, was the opening day of contemporary art in Art Basel.”

“As a system of divination, the *I Ching* can be used to interpret oracles. Although the result of divination is equivocal, suggestive or metaphorical, it does have a real influence on my way of thinking.”

on the grounds for “The House of Oracles.” It houses large roulette wheels, a divination table and weapon-like metal bars covered in pulp, which are made out of ancient divination books.

This installation brings together all sorts of objects and photographs relating to the *I Ching*, one of the most important Chinese classical texts, which provides a system that lies at the heart of Chinese cultural beliefs and other systems of divination.

“As a system of divination, the *I Ching* can be used to interpret oracles. Although the result of divination is equivocal, suggestive, or metaphorical, it does have a real influence on my way of thinking,” Huang said.

The tent also serves as Huang’s studio, where he produced all kinds of exhibition projects. “It evokes the work of the military strategist in ancient China: ‘Defining the strategy inside the tent and winning the battle 1,000 kilometers away,’” he said.

At the exit of the exhibiting hall, a living installation called “Theater of the World” is an allegorical representation of power dynamics relating to contemporary issues of ecology and environmental sustainability.

The work contains feeder crickets, pink-toed tarantulas, hissing cockroaches, giant millipedes, scorpions, lizards, snakes and toads.

It finds inspiration in “Gu,” the 18th hexagram and chapter of the *I Ching* that represents decay. It also describes a magical poison said to have been made in South China prepared by putting five venomous creatures – a centipede, a snake, a scorpion, a toad and a lizard – in a pot and storing them for a year.

Influenced by traditional Chinese philosophy and the importance of concepts of chance in the Chan Buddhist worldview, Huang introduced various aspects of chance into his working process. He began to spin roulette wheels, toss coins, throw dice and use divination systems found in the *I Ching*, which he still uses extensively today.

Huang felt that these methods enabled him to create artwork less influenced by his intellect and more independent of the individual artistic ego and notions of self. He also felt that the idea of submission to chance was more attuned to nature’s evolutionary process. An international curator, Hou Hanru said of Huang’s works, “everything is in permanent flux. Change is the only ‘truth.’”

He was influenced by Western cultures, especially Marcel Duchamp, a French artist who used his intellect and imagination in his artwork. Huang was intrigued by Duchamp’s anti-elitist notions, which rocked the prevailing values and the very foundations of Western art.

However, Huang supports the idea of the mutual influence of Western and Eastern cultures. He said, “The mutual influences among different cultures are very important. West, East, self and other are not fixed concepts.”

House of Oracles: A Huang Yongping Retrospective

Where: The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 4, Jiuxianqiao Lu, 798 Art District, Chaoyang

When: Daily 10 am – 6 pm, until June 1

Admission: 30 yuan (Adult), 10 yuan (Student), free (Children below 1.3m)

Tel: 8459 9269



The House of Oracles



The history of Chinese Painting



A 40-meter-long wooden Python Skeleton



Theater of the World



Theater of the World – Bridge

When Chinese fiction goes abroad

By Zhang Dongya

The two-week Beijing International Literary Festival held "China in Fiction," its closing event, at The Bookworm last Thursday. Writers Yiyun Li and Zhu Wen presented and discussed fiction from China.

Both Li and Zhu were born in China and lived abroad for many years. Li moved to the US in 1996 and only writes in English. Her debut short story collection, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, took several awards. Zhu Wen, a writer and filmmaker, is best known in English for his collection of novellas and short stories, *I Love Dollars*, translated by Julia Lovell.

Translation: still a bottle-neck

"China has good writers, good works and more, but too few good translations," Goran Malmqvist, a member of the Nobel Prize Committee, said.

"The success of a book is mostly determined by its translation. Translating Chinese fiction into English is very difficult. The cost of translation and lack of good translators scares off publishers. The best-known writers in the west are Lin Yutang and Gu Hongming, and they write in English," Zhu said.

Li said she will not consider translating her works to Chinese. "Literary translation would not work for this book. It would need a complete rewrite from beginning to end," she said.

"There are a lot of things I have to explain and situations I have to make sure my readers get. In China, if you mention the name of a place or year, the reader already has many memories associated with it," she said. Those memories influence her control over the story.

Cultural differences are always there

In the west, only the most famous writers can publish their short stories. In China, even the newest writers can publish a collection. Zhu said there are more outlets for new writers in China because of the country's vast collection of literary magazines, like *Selected Novels*.

Although Li writes in English, she only uses the first person plural, "we." Li said it is an inclusive voice. "People don't want to take responsibility for anything, and by using a 'we' voice, it is like imagining having 10 people behind you. That kind of speech is really common today in China. You hear people say 'we' more than 'I'."

Chinese readers and western readers receiving his works differently is just due to culture, Zhu said. In Japan, people did not laugh when watching his film and he was nervous. After the film, they came to him and said

they loved it.

Li thinks Chinese readers like to label writers. She was interviewed by a Chinese reporter who asked her whether she considered herself "Ha Jin's successor or Amy Tan's." "They make this comparison even though they never read my books, Ha Jin's or Amy Tan's. I think readers criticized them

for not paying attention," Li said.

Status of contemporary Chinese literature

Chinese works are frequently being picked up for translation into Western languages. "The authors that I have heard people talk about include Yu Hua, Mo Yan and most recently Jiang Rong and Yan Lianke," Li said.

However, some novels written by "alternative writers" like Wei Hui's *Shanghai Baby* are criticized in foreign market. A German sinologist, who uses the Chinese

name Gu Bin, criticized recent Chinese best sellers as "rubbish" when interviewed by German media.

Contemporary writer Zhu Tianwen said that what annoys the foreign market is actually not really con-

temporary Chinese literature. "When we talk about contemporary literature we are talking about Li Rui, Wang Anyi and Mo Yan – rarely Wei Hui or Mian Mian. I don't think they are in the same league. *Shanghai Baby* ... being translated into several languages is mostly a novelty."

Zhu said best sellers in west, like Zhang Rong, are unknown in China. Her works meet the western imagination of China, but can not represent contemporary Chinese literature.

Yiyun Li holds that great work would appeal to readers from different backgrounds. "Tolstoy and Chekhov are read and loved by readers who don't know a single Russian word."

About the authors

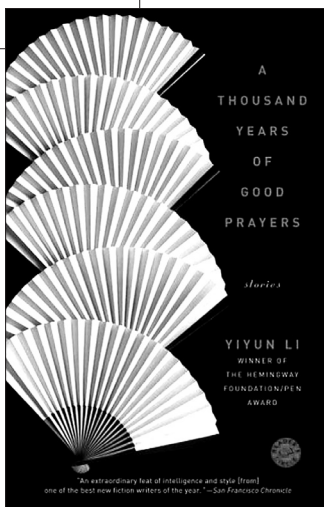
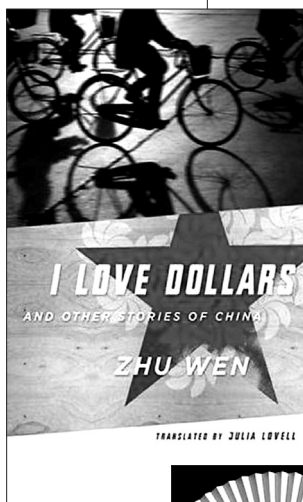
Yiyun Li grew up in Beijing and went to the US in 1996. Her stories and essays have been published in magazines in both the US and Britain. Her debut short story collection, *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, won international accolades including the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, PEN/Hemingway Award, Guardian First Book Award and California Book Award for first fiction.

Zhu Wen is a writer and a filmmaker, who is best known in English for *I Love Dollars*, his collection of novellas and short stories. His *South of the Clouds* took the NETPAC prize in Berlin in 2004.



Zhu Wen (left) and Yiyun Li talk fiction at The Bookworm.

Photo by Sam Christie



CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends the following new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance

By Barack Obama, 464pp, Crown, 150 yuan

Dreams from My Father tells the story of Obama's struggle to understand the forces that shaped him as the son of a black African father and white American mother – a struggle that takes him from

the American heartland to the ancestral home of his great-aunt in the tiny African village of Alego.

The Alibi Man

By Tami Hoag, 448pp, Bantam, 260 yuan

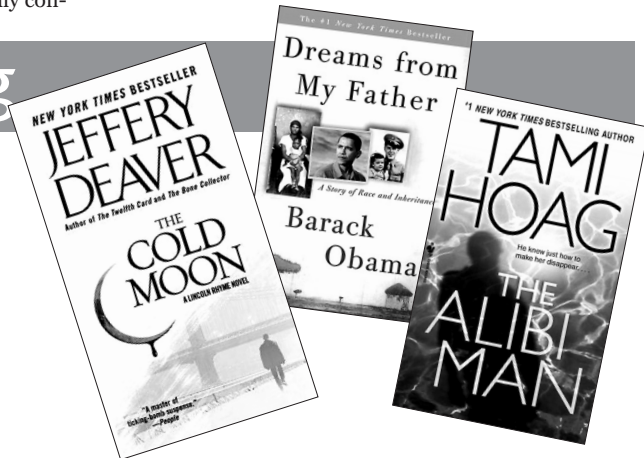
Elena Estes, former police-woman, former member of the elite of Palm Beach, Florida, is thrust back into both aspects of her former life when she discovers a woman's body in a canal. Physically healed from the wounds she sustained while working on a meth-lab bust, she has yet to recover emotionally from causing

another officer's death and has been living and working at her best friend's horse farm. When she realizes that the victim is the farm's beautiful, vibrant young groom Irina, Elena is determined to bring her killer to justice no matter what.

The Cold Moon

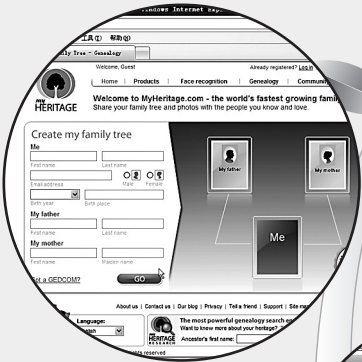
By Jeffery Deaver, 656pp, Pocket Star, 90 yuan

On a frigid December night, an eerie pattern emerges from two equally brutal murder scenes, where a killer's calling card is a moon-faced clock that seemingly ticked away the victims' last moments. From his



wheelchair, criminologist Lincoln Rhyme tracks the Watchmaker, a time-obsessed genius.
CNPIEC Bookstore
Where: the second floor of

CNPIEC, No 16 Gongti Dong Lu, Chaoyang
Open: 8:30 am – 6:30 pm
Tel: 6500 1859, 6592 6871
(By He Jianwei)



By Zhang Dongya

"A family tree is no longer something limited to the wall in your grandparents' house." You can build a family tree free online and share the pictures of family members, family stories and history with the rest of your family.

Putting down your cyber roots

Focus on family

Nacun.com, founded last October by Li Tong, a former Sun Microsystems employee, is the first Web-based family tree Web site in China.

The idea was drawn from two successful family-oriented sites, kindo.com, based in Putney, south-west London, UK, and MyHeritage.com, based in Tel Aviv, Israel. Both have provided ways for families to stay in touch.

Traditionally, Chinese families kept family trees, but this practice has never before transferred to the internet. "It is a [Chinese] tradition to research family history," Li said.

Before the foundation of Nacun, Li and his team researched the average family's status, members' ages, their dependency on the Internet and the time they spend annually visiting relatives and graves. "The results showed that they spent little time communicating with family, but wanted to spend more," Li said.

"The best part of Nacun is the whole family can manage a space together, and all the things we record on Nacun will be memories for the future," Zhutou, a Nacun village resident and family elder, said. Zhutou read about Nacun in an article about social networking Web sites in October.

His family blog on Nacun is used pri-

marily for his baby Doudou, who was born in the end of January. He posts Doudou's pictures and his everyday activities in life to record his growth. "It is so great that Nacun has no limitations on the size and number of pictures uploaded. I think it is a good way to record Doudou's infancy."

In forms of village

Li Tong named the Web site "Nacun," that village, to try and make it more appealing to people who live in single-surname villages. All its functions and services are named according to real life villages.

Nacun nashi, stories in villages, list recent activities of friends and family members, such as if a former roommate uploads a video of her family's weekend get-together.

There is also a club called Hezuoshe, Cooperative Union, for families with similar interests or hobbies to get together. In this union, "villagers" can set up a discussion group for communication. "If you learned your relatives bought the same stock as you, you can share the stock information in Hezuoshe, and these groups can strengthen their sense of trust in family," Li said.

Some active families will be selected as "example families" each week. Families that frequently update their blogs or have a high readership rate are considered for example status. Being featured means being entered in lucky draw events and given promotion

items like toys and decorations.

Nacun has a young team of 15 people, called Cunweihui, the Village Committee, on its Web site. These users make up the village elder and consultants. They also have a village broadcast station to put important notices online.

Calls for real relation

Nacun is a family communication platform rooted in real social relationships.

"Nacun is different from other Web sites, like blog services. Those are focused on the individual: Nacun is focused on the family. Virtual families are not allowed on Nacun, any family must be a real one - that is why we use invitations. It ensures that information shared among families is authentic," Li said.

Nacun is private, and information posted to the site is kept private. Only other family members can see your private information with a password. You can also choose to make your family open, allowing public access.

"It does not rely on promotions in the media - Nacun is spread by word of mouth," Li said. At the very beginning, its staff was the first user group. They moved their families onto Nacun, and then invited their friends. Currently, Nacun has about 40,000 registered "villagers."

"It is growing at a stable rate," Li Tong said. "I think the number shows there is a broad market."

Other Web sites

Kindo.com

Kindo lets users build a free family tree online to share with other family members. The Web site is available in 11 languages, giving it an international angle. Kindo gives families all over the world a place to meet. It provides family trees of celebrities like Barack Obama, David Beckham and the animated characters from The Simpsons.

MyHeritage.com

MyHeritage, founded in 2005, boasts the world's fastest-growing family network. Its vision has been to make it easier for people around the world to use the power of the Internet to discover their heritage and strengthen their bonds with family and friends.

CFP Photo



Online oddities

By David Drakeford

Shopping online is great. No waiting in line, no hard-selling pitch men, no "art students" or tea house charlatans. Sure we could tell you about the great bargains to be had on the various shopping sites but you probably know about those already, right? Here are a few things you didn't know you wanted.

Jade Fuwa sets

The 2008 Olympic Games will be held in Beijing. There will be a lot of affiliated merchandise. Chances are these last two sentences will not come as a shock to readers. This week's insider's tip is that you can snap up some collectables online before the unwashed hordes get to them. A prime example is a limited number (2008) of Jade Fuwa sets. These "innocent and lovely children's images ... with an elegant and noble character" certainly don't gyp you on lofty adjectives, and the sales pitch will scotch any notion that stamping out superstition is being taken seriously in

China. This numerological nonsense is worth quoting in full:

Huanhuan's height is 112 millimeters, which stands for the period of the modern Olympics from 1896 to 2008. The other four Fuwa's height is 100 millimeters, symbolizing completion and victory. The height of the podium is 29mm, which means the 29th Olympic Games. The Jade Ruyi has a length of 66 millimeters and a width of 29 millimeters. The number six is an auspicious number in tradi-

tional Chinese culture, expressing the Chinese beautiful wish for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

If you buy a set then

it's fair to predict Lady Luck herself will lift you up on wings of good fortune to carry you wherever you wish – I'd suggest Macau.

Available: 2008eshop.cn

Price: 290,000 yuan



Love Moon sanitary pads

Shopping online in Chinese may be troublesome for the non-native speaker. Thebeijinger has a popular classified section where some decent bargains can be snapped up – often from homeward-bound *laowai* who could not cut life in China's fast-moving capital. Adverts are in English, with the occasional smattering of Chinglish for your enjoyment. "Love Moon sanitary pads" for instance feature "seven unique characteristics and eight functions" suggesting the marketing mastermind behind the product used to write political slogans. Some of the rather more dubious claims are that the pads can "adjust blood pressure," "accelerate metabolism" and "eradicate fatigue." Oh, and the pad's seventh layer is "Specially-designed edible back adhesive." If you believe the hype, be prepared to pay through the nose.

Available: thebeijinger.com

Price: 438 yuan



Hello Kitty spoons

Although Japanese in origin, Hello Kitty's cute-but-inscrutable face has really struck a chord amongst Chinese buyers. Most of the 50,000 or so products Kitty endorses seem to be available online, from mobile phone chains for a few yuan to high-priced pink laptop computers – perhaps the inspiration for Edison Chen's fateful attempt to store data securely. Kitty also has a boyfriend with an equally incongruous name – Dear Daniel. Daniel is not quite the masculine cat you might have hoped for. In fact, whichever species Kitty belongs to seems to completely lack sexual dimorphism – Daniel is basically Kitty in an undersized cap. He is the best Kitty's got however and her faithful companion in consumerism. Take this "couples ear spoon" for instance. Didn't know you needed a his-hers ear-cleaning set? You do.

Available: taobao.com

Price: 30 yuan



Da Wei's identification

The adult section of Eachnet has some truly bizarre items. One that really caught this writer's eye was the "Wish You A Precious Son Ovulation Test Paper." At first I assumed it was some kind of contraceptive device as it features a mug shot of the kind of nasty brat most people would rather nip in the bud right from the get-go. In fact, it is designed to help you identify the best time in your womanly cycle to conceive such a creature. The brand name is "Da Wei," which, until today, was my Chinese name.

Available: eachnet.com

Price: 35 yuan



Golden Medal Chuck

Beef

It's what's in the pot

By Gan Tian

If you are a hotpot fan, chances are you have ordered a plate of beef to toss in at some point. Yizunhuangniu, opened last Thursday, has a new special recipe that reinvents the beef hotpot experience. Calling itself a "professional and dedicated expert in beef catering," the restaurant provides something a little different to answer the question "What's for dinner?" *Beijing Today* has the best of Yizunhuangniu.

What's in a name?

Yizunhuangniu is a four-character name taken from *yizun*, the best, *huang*, the emperor, and *niu*, a cow. The name ambitiously suggests that it provides beef fit for an emperor.

In the palace

Yizunhuangniu is located in Wanda Plaza. Its door's decor, located on the first floor, is hardly attractive, and its waiting area is nothing to write home about, but the restaurant still manages to stand out.

The second-floor is decorated with dark red and black walls, tables and chairs. The restaurant interior is reminiscent of the cold halls of the Forbidden City.

The elaborately-carved furniture and sculptures give the area a noble atmosphere. Popular designs are birds, flowers and scenery.

Even the washroom has something interesting to discover. When I was ready to use the commode there, I found it was automatic.



Nutrient and Health-keeping Soup King

Photos provided by Yizunhuangniu

Other recommendations

Dolar shop

Where: F7, Joy City, 131, Xidan Bei Dajie, Xicheng District

Tel: 5971 6881, 5971 6882

Open: 10 am – 9 pm

Fenghua Hotpot

Where: F5, SOGO Shopping Mall, 8, Xuanwumen Wai Dajie, Xuanwu District

Tel: 6310 4703 6310 4702

Open: 10 am – 9:30 pm

Fanshigang Hotpot

Where: A8, Xibahe Bei Li, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6429 5300, 8675 8075

Open: 10 am – 9:30 pm

Fat Cat Hotpot

Where: 76A, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8403 9980

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Chongqing Kongliang Hotpot

Where: 218, Dongzhimen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8511 5556, 8511 5557

Open: 10 am – 11 pm

Mala Xiangguo

Where: 220, Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8091 3051

Open: 10 am – 10 pm



The inside view



Fresh Lamb with Beer

High-class hotpot

What do you think of when you hear hotpot? A bunch of guys sitting around a table, fire burning in the middle?

Hardly.

Even if you are dining with friends, you do not have to share a central pot. Each customer gets a small pot by his right hand. The left hand is where the waiters place seasonings.

There is no need to smell gas or oil – the pots are electromagnetic. There are four small buttons hidden under the tablecloth, and the waitresses are always nearby to help operate them.

Beef at its best

No wonder the beef here is the best.

They have different catalogs for different cuts of beef. For example, the "Diamond Rib Eye" is a small, ball-shape but, The Supreme Angus Beef Ribs, 188 yuan, is sliced into a square. When you put them in the pot for only a little while, they will taste tender. The Japanese-style Sirloin Steak, 580 yuan, packs a bit more flavor.

The Hand-cut Fresh Rolls, listed in the Excellent Beef catalog, are only 98 yuan. If you think the rolls are too much, try the Exquisite Mutton in a Goblet, which costs only 12 yuan. The meat is served in a small wine glass. There are also Hand-cut Beef Shanks, 48 yuan, and Short Ribs, 60 yuan.

Though beef is the order of the day, Yizunhuangniu also serves an Angus Combination of Beef Ribs and Goose Liver, 288 yuan.

Yizunhuangniu

Where: F2, Building 19, Wanda Plaza, 93, Jianguolu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5960 4577, 5960 4566

Open: 10 am – 10 pm



Exquisite Mutton in a Goblet



Golden Medal Rib Eye

Dining

**Die Kochmutzen –
Made in Germany**

You can enjoy a great German lunch or dinner in this traditional Landgasthaus – a classic German inn or tavern.

The restaurant celebrates its third anniversary on April 5. Die Kochmutzen offers free flowing HB Beer from 5 to 7 pm on that day. A three-course anniversary menu is also planned with butcher starter, sausage mix and apple strudel for dessert for only 103 yuan.

Where: Die Kochmutzen, 718, Building 7, Jianwai SOHO, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhonglu, Chaoyang

Open: Daily 11 am – 11 pm

Tel: 5869 3830



Aviation

**Emirates' A380 spreading its wings**

Emirates' giant Airbus A380s will spread their wings to some of the farthest points on the airline's network – New York, London Heathrow, Sydney and Auckland – reinforcing the airline's extensive reach and span.

Emirates is scheduled to operate its new A380s non-stop from Dubai to New York on October 1, London Heathrow on December 1, and Sydney-Auckland on February 1, 2009. The aircraft on these routes will offer 489 seats – 14 in First Class, 76 in Business and 399 in Economy.

With a route network that currently spans over 90 destinations in 62 countries, Emirates will offer services to Cape Town on 30th March. The airline has also announced services to Kozhikode (Calicut) from 1st July.

Nightlife

2008 guitar star

This show features Chen Lei from the band Tang Dynasty and Wen Lin from the band Zi Yue, as well as guest artist Zhu Bin'ang.

Where: The Star Live, F/3, 79 Hepingli Xijie, Dongcheng

When: 9 pm, March 30

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 6425 5677

**Wu Kejia and Gao Bo
folk music show**

Where: New Get Luck Bar (Haoyun), A1 Xingba Lu, Nuren Jie, Chaoyang

When: 9:30 pm, April 2

Admission: Free

Tel: 8448 3335

The melody of eyes

Where: SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: 3 pm, March 29

Admission: Free

Tel: 6553 1184



Camp

May Holiday Theatre kids camp

Beijing Playhouse will open a weeklong theater camp from April 28 to May 3. Children aged from 6 to 18 are welcome to register. During the camp, all kids will get a role and learn how to act, sing, dance and make props and costumes.

Registration is required on or before March 30. Camp tuition is 2,520 yuan. Email performance@beijingplayhouse.com for more information and to register.

Outdoors

Fifteen Towers hike

The Fifteen Towers form part of the Great Wall east of Mutianyu, and after a short climb up to the wall, you will be walking all the way from the first to the fifteenth. Along the way there are some rocky parts to climb and some boulders to climb over. This hike may not be suitable for people who are scared of heights.

Where: Meet on the ground floor



of Starbucks (Jiangtai Lu, Lido Holiday Inn)

When: 8 am – 5:30 pm, March 29

Cost: 300 yuan

Tel: 13910025516
(reservations are essential)

Wuyi Mountains and rock tea

The Wuyi Mountains are a mountain range located on the northern border of Fujian Province and Jiangxi Province. The mountains cover an area of 60 square kilometers. In 1999, Mount Wuyi entered UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites, both natural and cultural. The Wuyi Mountains are the largest and most representative example of Chinese subtropical forests and South Chinese rainforests' biodiversity.

The landscape is characterized by winding river valleys flanked by columnar or dome-shaped cliffs as well as cave systems. Its tree-covered granite mountains and caves of various shapes, its bustling waterfalls and tranquil mountain streams, and its abundance of plants, flowers, animals, birds, and fish species caught the attention of a Chinese emperor in the eighth century.

Wuyi Yan Cha (Wuyi Rock Tea) has a distinctive taste of sunburned



mountain rocks and numerous types of tea are produced around Mount Wuyi which is the origin of the real Da Hong Pao tea and Lapsang souchong, Wuyi Tea. Wuyi Tea is the most powerful natural weight loss solution available to the public today. It is a unique combination of ingredients working for efficient weight reduction when combined with a healthy diet.

When: Fly to Wuyishan on the evening of March 28 and return on March 30

Cost: 4,950 yuan

Tel: 6432 9341, 6432 1041

(registration at CCC is important)

(By Li Jing)

The skinny on stretching

By Li Fenghua

Flexibility training is a growing fitness trend among old people after a softer workout. The media's positive portrayal of yoga and Pilates, including pictures and interviews with celebrities, has increased the public's interest in this form of exercise.

There is no question that yoga and Pilates have revolutionized the way many of us exercise by going beyond a "no pain, no gain" mentality to a more holistic workout. However, these forms of exercise can permanently alter body alignment, muscular balance and posture when students are pushed to

extreme ranges.

You should never impose an irregular range of motion on your body. It should be allowed by your body, without force. Some people are born with the natural ability to stretch their body to abnormal limits, but most people have to work at maintaining their normal range of motion or lose flexibility as they age.

Understanding stretching

To understand stretching, you must realize that your muscles are not in charge of your range of motion. Skeletal muscle facilitates bone and joint actions, which dictates your range of motion.

• Each joint has a distinct contact surface that determines its mobility and limitations. When you stretch your muscle, it is actually the joint and ligaments being moved across these

various contact surfaces. A normal range of motion is part of healthy joint movement, but it is very unhealthy for individuals to stretch past their limitations.

• Flexibility and range of motion are critical components in the fitness equation, and every method and technique must be appropriate to what you are stretching and who is doing the stretching. Each person's body

defines its own range of motion, and there is no standard when dealing with a varied population.

• Studies have shown that people who continuously perform intense stretches that exceed their physical limitation create uneven mechanical wear on the joints and ligaments, which leads to osteoarthritis.

Types of stretching

Here's a brief description of a few stretching techniques:

Static: Static stretching is often seen in the health clubs or at sporting events when athletes slowly stretch their muscles to the end point of movement and hold the stretch for a period of time, such as doing the splits.

Ballistic: Ballistic stretching is a very controversial technique that uses bouncing and abrupt movements to gain momentum to create greater range of motion. Most experts feel that this type of stretch does not allow the muscles and tendons to fully adapt to the demand of the stretch position.

Active: In an active stretch, the limbs and joints are stretched to a given point and held in position using an opposing muscle group. This form

of stretch is demanding, but effective because there is no external force applying pressure to the skeletal muscle.

Passive: During the passive stretch, muscles are taken through their range of motion by an external force, such as a piece of equipment, your own hand or a partner. For example, to perform a passive stretch of the chest, a partner would stretch you by securing your arms behind your body.

Slow movement: Slow movements of a muscle, such as neck, arm and trunk rotations, are stretching techniques that are more appropriate for warming up to do another activity.

Basic Guidelines for stretching exercises

- All warm-up programs should consist of pulse-raising activities, along with mobility and stretching activities
- Only stretch after the muscles have warmed up
- Only stretch to the point of mild tension: no stretch should ever be painful

- Stretching exercises are static in nature and should be held for 20-30 seconds
- Do not use any bouncing or jerky movements when you are stretching
- Do not hold your breath. Breathing normally will help you to relax
- Stretch before and after all physical activity

Simple things you can do

This exercise can be done even during office hours when you start to feel stress and tension building up.

Sitting in a chair and putting one leg out straight, flex your toes towards your knee, now lean towards that foot, stretching your hands towards it and letting your head and shoulders follow, hold for two seconds and repeat five times. This will create a stretch right across your lower back and neck.

A flexible body is:

- More efficient
- More easily trained for strength and endurance
- Enjoys more range of motion
- Stays balanced more easily and is less prone to injury

- Recovers from workouts more quickly, and feels better.

If this is your goal, then try to start utilizing these exercises every day and say goodbye to your stress and tension.

CFP Photo

Sending up a spring kite



A traditional way to greet the season?

CFP Photos

Tracing history

The first known kite entered the skies in fourth century BC. Made entirely of wood and fashioned like an eagle, the kite was constructed by the Confucian philosopher and hermit Mo Zi, who lived on Mount Lu in modern-day Shandong Province.

Kites developed during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC) and were designed as tools of war for reconnaissance, relaying information and measuring distance. Some kites actually carried bundles of gunpowder.

By Tang Dynasty (618-907), kites left the hands of generals and entered the hands of well-to-do children. Kites soon became associated with the Tomb Sweeping Festival. While the festival traditionally focused on the sweeping of ancestral tombs and the offering of money and food to the dead, it also celebrated the coming of spring. The festival, still celebrated today, occurs in the first week of April – perfect for kite enthusiasts.

Types of Kites

There are three types of traditional kites commonly flown in China. The first type is the hard-wing kite, because the wings are reinforced on both the front and the back, forming a stiff wing capable of flying at high altitudes. These kites often take the shapes of swallows, eagles or other birds.

The second type is the soft-wing. It is not reinforced and flutters freely in the wind. Typical shapes include butterflies, dragonflies and fish. All similarities end once the kites are in the air, however.

The third type of kite is the dragon or centipede kite, which has a long body composed of dozens of segments connected by strands of twine. Unlike the two other kites, getting the dragon kite in the air requires special skill. This is because the most decorated part of the kite, the dragon head, doesn't aid in its flight – it's purely ornamental. The kite is flown segment-by-segment, tail first, and only after the entire body is in flight is the dragon head attached.

Selected places

Kite enthusiasts love to fly kites in and around Beijing at the following eight sites.

Tian'anmen Square

Tian'anmen Square may be the most spacious and popular place to fly a kite. It is a bright and beautiful scene when the sky is dotted with kites on a clear day. Keep your distance from the flagpole and the national flag.

Getting there: By subway line 1 to Tian'anmen East or West

Temple of Heaven

The temple has a spacious white marble passage between the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests and the Circular Mound Altar. It is one of the best places to fly a kite. Get out of the way when tourists pass through.

Getting there: there are many buses to the four gates of the Temple of Heaven, such as bus 17, 20, 54, 106, 116 or 120

Chaoyang Park

The park is a popular place to fly a kite. Many people meet up on a stretch of lawn to the north to fly kites. The trees are not tall and space is ample.

Getting there: By buses 731, 831, 815, 758, 834 or 988

China Millennium Monument

The area in the China Millennium Monument is expansive and the trees are sparse. Do not tread on the grass while flying your kite.

Getting there: By subway line 1 to the Military Museum

Shijingshan Amusement Park

There are many entertainment projects in Shijingshan Amusement Park. The open space before the park is a good spot to fly a kite. It is close to the road, so be careful. At the center of the square there is a fountain. Be careful not to slip.

Getting there: By subway line 1 and get off at Bajiao Youleyuan, or by buses 337, 327, 325, 354, 385 or 728

Qinglong Lake

The Qinglong Lake is located between the Fengtai and Fangshan district of Beijing. It is a beautiful area covered in grass and flowers.

Getting there: By 917 Fangshan direct line, get off at Liangxiang Beiguan and change No 6 minibus to Qinglong Lake

Yangtai Mountain

Fly a kite on the the summit of Yangtai Mountain, located in Haidian district. There is a valley between Yangtai Mountain and Fenghuang Mountain that gets excellent breezes for kite flying.

Getting there: By 346 bus at East Gate of the Summer Palace and get off at Beianhe Bei Kou.

Mang Mountain

The Mang Mountain is located in the northeast of the Shisanling, or Thirteen Tombs, Reservoir. The ground is smooth and spacious, and the air is fresh. Enjoy a wonderful view of green water and groups of wild ducks when you fly a kite.

Getting there: By 912 bus at Andingmen, or 845 bus at Xizhimen and get off at Shisanling Reservoir.

Flying a kite was once a "traditional ceremony" to greet each spring in the capital. Old residents may still remember the colorful kites in Changdian and one exquisite kite named "Shayaner." To fly a kite in Spring time is the best way to shake hands with the wind, relax and enjoy the sunshine.



Tian'anmen Square is the ideal place to fly a kite both day and night.



Tips

Wear a pair of sunglasses to guard the eyes against sun exposure.

Choose a nice and sunny day to fly a kite.

Select an open space, but make sure that it is safe. Keep away from the airport, utility poles, railways and roads.

Remember to wind up any line you are not using. Stray kite thread can be dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.

Return your kite to the store if it is broken.

(By He Jianwei)

Tuscany

By Jackie Zhang

Tuscany, one of Italy's most famous regions, is known for its role in the Renaissance, its cities and towns rich with history, art, beautiful landscapes, delicious food and superb wines.

Florence, the capital, is a popular tourist destination and Pisa is immediately recognizable for its Leaning Tower. But beyond the big-name destinations are numerous small towns with centuries of history

Heart of the Medieval Renaissance



Paolo Cocchi, Tuscany regional minister of Tourism, Trade and Culture

There are 5 million reasons to come to Tuscany: it draws 5 million visitors every year. Tuscany is famous for its art atmosphere.

I suggest you visit places not only in Florence, the capital city and the region's most popular tourist destination, but also other small towns. There are plenty of Middle Age treasures such as sculptures, buildings, paintings and statues. The Renaissance was a time when Italian art and culture developed rapidly. The remains in these

towns record that progress.

The region's mountains are a beautiful natural landscape. The coast lines are a good place for holiday. If you come to Tuscany, do not pass up a chance to taste the wine. Wine tours to local vineyards and family-owned wineries are available.

You can design your tour route in different ways. For example, you can make coastline destinations the main content, or you can live in hot spring hostels by many famous cultural sites and cities.



Pinocchio was written in Collodi, a Tuscany town.

Magliano, walled town

The strategic importance of Magliano, a town close to the sea and the inland of Mount Amiata and Pitigliano, has never been doubted. The surrounding walls of Magliano are one of the most interesting and complete medieval urban fortifications of Tuscany, not only for their scenic effects but also for the excellent example of military architecture they represent.

There was once a castle on the hill where the village stands, mentioned for the first time in 1097. In 1327, the castle burned down, and in 1358, it was perpetually leased to the Republic of Siena, which conceded it to the Lords at Spinello di Spinello Tolomei. The Sienese immediately started restoring the Keep, which no longer exists today.

Three sides of the town walls remain well preserved, interspersed with round towers and square towers, remnants of the ancient castle, perfectly merging with the preexisting Aldobrandeschi and late medieval Sienese additions.

The wall path, recently restored and still usable, is supported by suspended arches on upside down triangular shelves, a classic Sienese military architectural style. The north side is joined with the houses and not easily visible. The Gate of San Giovanni on the south side and that of San Martino on the north side are two original entrances to the enclosure. Next to the Gate of San Giovanni, you can still see the oldest part of the wall dominated by a square tower.

The stone wall continues until it connects to the Sienese walls on its west side. The walls are thicker than others and face the sea. They are interspersed with six round towers with arrow slits. The walls were originally taller and finished with a brick protrusion with arches and crenellations.

Where: Located in the south of Grosseto province

Collodi, creator of Pinocchio

Collodi is an old quiet town. It is famous for its two gardens. One of them was built from 1633 to 1665. The villa used to belong to the local Garzoni Family and was built in the 12th Century. There is an open-air theater surrounded by boxtrees, an ancient outdoor bathing place. The villa is the main architecture with splendid stairs, frescos and portraits made by the Carracci Family.

The other was built in 1850s to memorialize the author Italian Carlo Lorenzini. Most of Lorenzini's childhood was spent near Garzoni Villa. His mother was born in the town and his uncle was the manager of the villa. Lorenzini's most famous story is *The Adventures of Pinocchio*.

Locals constructed a Pinocchio theme park in 1956. There are numerous statues of the characters in the Pinocchio story. They show the whole length of Pinocchio's adventure. There is a maze, a pleasure ground, an exhibition center and a children's restaurant.

Along the street next to the villa, visitors can walk to the medieval town center. The San Bartolome Church was built in the 13th Century and was renovated several times. At present, frescos from the 15th Century and some clay statues are still preserved.

Where: Located in the northern part of Tuscany. Drive northeast on Road S435 from Lucca.

Bagni, hot springs and scenery

Many towns located in the Apennines area in the southwest of Tuscany are famous for their medicinal hot springs. Bagni is one of them. Since it is

near Lucca, locals call it *Bagni di Lucca*, which means the bath place of Lucca. The town is surrounded by forests, with two rivers, Lima and Serchio, which flow in from each side.

The history of Bagni goes back to the 9th century. It was an independent city-state embroiled in continuous battles. Many of its fortresses still stand. In modern times, people discovered the Corsena hot springs here and found it offered health benefits. Starting around the 12th century, nobles from European countries came to the hot springs to bathe, and soon the town became their favorite place for holiday. By the 1800s, Bagni became one of Italy's three most famous hot spring resorts.

Where: Located in the drainage area of River Serchio, Lucca Province. Direct buses are available from Lucca



The town wall of Magliano
Photos by Pbase.com



A bridge in Bagni di Lucca



The combination of town and town wall in Magliano.
CFP Photos



Movie of this Week

Hitch⁽¹⁾ is a 2005 romantic comedy starring Will Smith, Eva Mendes, Kevin James and Amber Valletta. Directed by Andy Tennant, the movie is entertaining, and the tips that are given by Hitch aren't all that bad. The dialogue is good. I personally enjoyed the ending, and I would probably watch this if I was feeling particularly sappy, as it is a romantic movie.

Synopsis

Alex "Hitch" Hitchens (Will Smith) is a professional matchmaker. His clients are men who think that they could never have a chance with the girl they have been pining for. These men come to him explaining their situation, and he makes an opportunity for a relationship to arise. While helping a client with his own love-interest, Hitch meets a gossip-columnist who may just change his outlook on love, though love has been what he's been dealing with every day of his life.



Scene one

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens:

Basic principles: No woman wakes up saying: "God, I hope I don't get swept off my feet⁽²⁾ today." Now, she might say, "This is a really bad time for me." Or something like, "I just need some space." Or my personal favorite: "I'm really into my career⁽³⁾ right now." You believe that? Neither does she. You know why? Because she's lying to you, that's why. You understand me? Lying. It's not a bad time for her. She doesn't need any space. She may be into her career, but what she's really saying is, "Get away from me now." Or possibly, "Try harder, stupid." Well, which one is it? Sixty percent of all human communication is non-verbal. Body language. Thirty percent is your tone. So that means that ninety percent of what you're saying ain't coming out of your mouth.

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens:

"You" is a very fluid concept right now. You bought the shoes. You look great in the shoes. That's you I'm talking about. The key tonight is hang back⁽⁴⁾. Give her plenty of space. If she lingers at a photograph, move on. But maintain the visual. All right now, supposed to be 64 and clear tonight. So when you leave the club, walk a little. Ask her what she thought about the show, what was her favorite photograph, why that one. And when she answers, don't be looking at her mouth. Don't be wondering what she looks like naked. Listen to what she is saying and respond.

Man: Listen and respond.

Listen and respond.

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens: That



way, when it's your turn to talk, you'll have something better to say than, "I like your mouth."

Woman: What was your favorite one?

Man: The elephant, definitely. Yeah.

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens: And all of a sudden, we're on date number two.

Woman: Ready. No way. We're going back in there. You have to smile.

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens: In case you didn't go to high school, hitting⁽⁵⁾ is a good thing. So how does it happen, great love?

Man: Are you okay?

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens: Nobody knows.

Woman: I'm good.

Man: Let me get a Bomb Pop and a Screwball for the lady.

Alex 'Hitch' Hitchens: But what I can tell you is that it happens in the blink of an eye⁽⁶⁾. One moment, you're enjoying your life. And the next, you're wondering how you ever lived without them. Three dates is all I need. Three

dates, and I'll get you here, to the high-stakes medal round where eight out of 10 women believe that the first kiss will tell them everything they need to know about the relationship. After that, you're on your own. But always remember: Life is not the amount of breaths you take. It's the moments that take your breath away.

Scene two

Sara: What happened? You change your mind?

Alex: It just died⁽⁷⁾.

Sara: Did you put gas in it?

Alex: No. You know, I think it must have sucked up⁽⁸⁾ a diaper or something.

Sara: Gross⁽⁹⁾. Try it again. You want me to call AAA⁽¹⁰⁾?

Alex: Come on around and let me hop on⁽¹¹⁾ with you.

Sara: I don't know. What if you break mine, too? Then we'll both be sitting ducks⁽¹²⁾.

Alex: I didn't break it. It just died.

Sara: Yeah, yeah. All right, hop on.

Alex: Scoot back⁽¹³⁾.

Sara: Hitch, I'm already here.

Alex: But you don't know where we're going.

Sara: Why don't you tell me? Then we'll both know.

Alex: Sara.

Sara: Man, male egos. I don't know how you guys make it through the day with them.

Alex: What? It is not my ego. I just don't want to ruin the surprise. Sara! Sara! I'm sorry. Are you all right?

Larry: There. I always keep a few of those around.

Sara: Thank you.

Larry: I have lower back trouble. I just shove the ice packs right down there. No, no, no. That's a fresh one.

Alex: So, Ellis Island.

Sara: I have to admit, I have lived in New York my whole life and I've never been here.

Alex: I figured that. Most people haven't. So I got my man Larry here to set us up a private tour.

Sara: Great!

Larry: Anything for Hitch. It was originally known as Oyster Island. The island was expanded to its present size with dirt removed during the construction of the New York subway system.

Sara: Are you serious?

Larry: Yes.

Vocabulary

- 1 Hitch:** a small problem that makes something difficult or delays it for a short time
- 2. Sweep someone off their feet:** to cause someone to fall suddenly and completely in love with you.
- 3. Into one's career:** obsessed by your work.
- 4. Hang back:** to be doubtful or undecided; waver or hesitate, but here means don't follow so closely.
- 5 Hitting:** meet up with
- 6. The blink of an eye:** happening very quickly.
- 7 It just died:** engine stop working and will not turn over.
- 8. Suck up:** to draw (water, moisture, air, etc.) by or as if by suction. Here means to be obsequious; toady (slang).
- 9. Gross:** (slang) extremely objectionable, offensive, or disgusting
- 10. AAA:** American Automobile Association
- 11. Hop on:** climb up on the back of; mount a horse or motorbike
- 12. Sitting duck:** a helpless or easy target or victim
- 13. Scoot back:** move your body back slightly

(By Han Manman)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at gantian@ynet.com.

Nailing down the meaning

By Gan Tian

When Jeremy Huson, my English friend who has been in Beijing for five years, bought a new apartment near Dongzhimen, he invited us for a house warming party. Housing prices are always a hot topic.

"Come on, buddy, nowadays it is so expensive. I don't think it was wise to buy an apartment at this time," I said.

"No. I wanted it, and I bought it," Jeremy said like a prince. His British accent always sounded so noble.

"How much was it again?" Jane, an American girl, asked.

"Because it is not a new apartment, they offered me 25,000 yuan per square meter, but they said if I paid on the nail, there would be a discount! I think I got it at a good price ..." Jeremy went on, but was soon interrupted by me.

"Wait, wait. What's this 'nail thing' you mentioned? You have to pay for every nail in this house?" I asked.

I looked at Jane. She also had a puzzled expression on her face.

Jeremy and his British friends laughed out loud. Richard stood up and explained everything, "In this expression, nail doesn't have anything to do with those thin pointed pieces of metal that you drive into wood with a hammer. Nothing to do with that whatsoever."

"There is another meaning," Jane said, "nails also relate to fingers and toes! This explanation still does not explain what Jeremy said!"

"Actually, to pay on the nail is an idiom, which means to pay immediately," Jeremy said.

"Then why haven't I heard of this before?" Jane was puzzled again, "Don't lie to me!"

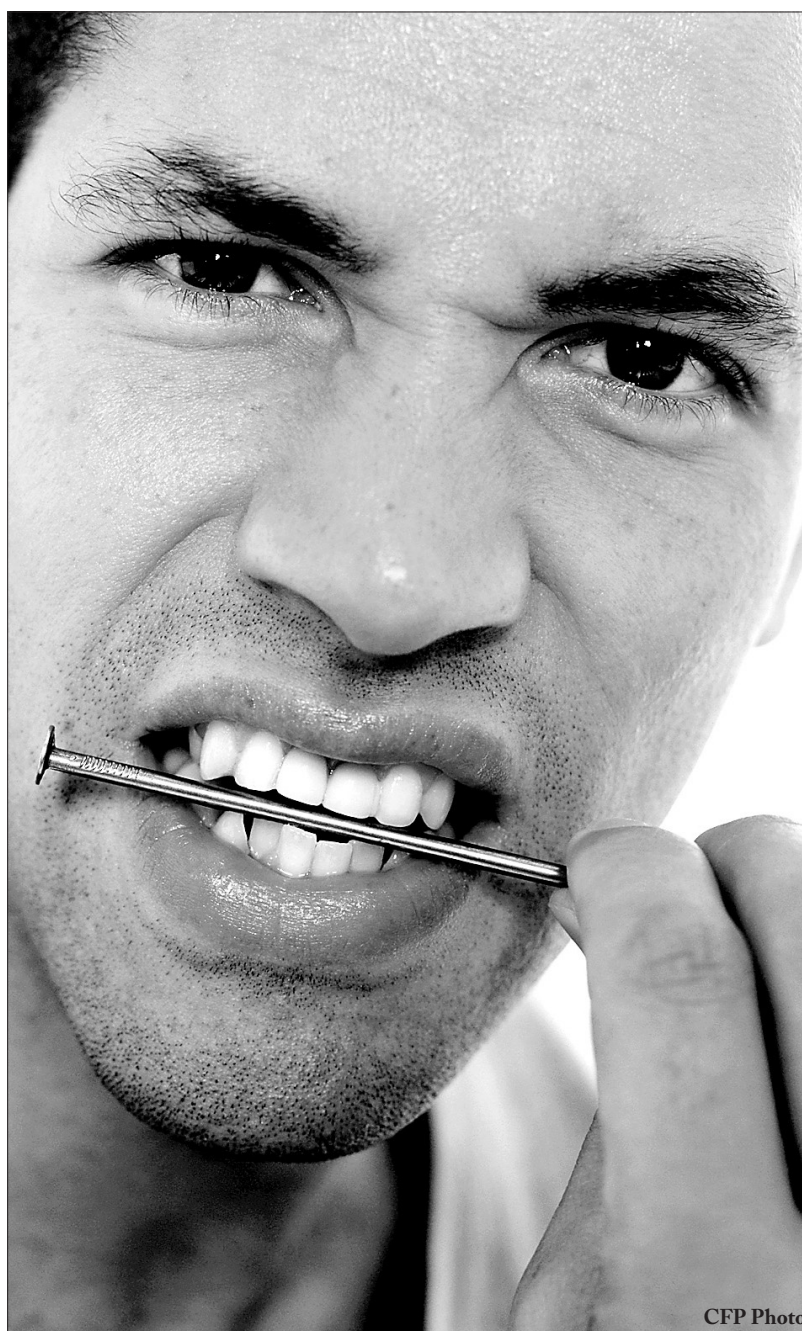
"Maybe because you are too young," Jeremy said.

"All right, no joking any more," Richard was always the good guy. He said, "Because it is a typical British idiom, you just don't know it!"

Suddenly I understood everything. When I got home I still could not forget the expression so I looked it up in the dictionary, and found something even funnier.

"On the nail" is a British idiom, but it also has another meaning other than what Richard had described which is, "correct," which I bet Americans and British all understand.

The dictionary gave this example, "Her comments about their relationship were right on the nail." Very interesting. I had finally nailed the meaning.



CFP Photo

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to gantian@ynet.com together with your name and address.



Resting little grass

By Derrick Sobodash

It never fails to amaze how many different signs are written for the same public notice. Grass seems of particular fascination.

Rarely do these signs say something simple and direct, like "Keep off the grass!" Instead, we get "Please help us to protect the luxurious grasslands" posted in front of five blades shooting out the center of a ceramic tile.

This week, it is "Don't bother the resting little grass."

Whether grass can actually rest is a question best left to people smarter than I. Sure it can stop growing temporarily, but do rigid plant cell walls suddenly relax whenever the grass has been standing too long?

And let's not forget that this sign suggests a plant without a central nervous system, or even a brain, is somehow capable of feeling "bothered." Sure it is cute to personify objects, but it comes off goofy when done in a public notice.

While *xiao cao* may be little grass, most people only associate the word grass with the green stuff one walks on, which is already little. It may also sound better if the wording is left closer to Chinese and this sign is translated in two parts, for example, "The grass is resting, please don't disturb it."

Cute, to be sure, but it seems foreigners would more immediately respond to a direct sign like "Don't walk on the grass!"

Blacklist

Beijing Today has come up with Blacklist, a new column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then this page is your new best friend. Watch it for each week.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. A meaningful day one for years to come

It is all right when we say "a meaningful day." If you want to replace "day" with "one", you can only say: Of all the days in the city, it is a meaningful one. We can never say, "A meaningful day one."

2. Past time

Don't be confused with past time and pastime. Past time means time passed. If you wish to express sport, amusement, diversion or things that enable one to pass time agreeably, you have to use the word "pastime." Its synonymous with recreation, entertainment, amusement, diversion, play and sport.

3. A set of period of time

The phrase "a set of" is plural in a sense, meaning a collection of things. So, in this sense, it has to be "a set of periods of time."

Native Speaker: Joe Edwards

1. A meaningful day one for years to come

In this sentence, the word "one" is a very lost little fellow going through a distinct identity crisis. The sentence needs to be completely re-vamped to make any sense. Adding a few words and a comma can help. For example, "A meaningful day, one we will remember for years to come."

2. Past time

Are you ready for this? There are two versions of this expression and they are, "past time" and "pastime." The little gap between the two "t"s makes a world of difference in meaning. "Past time" means a time that is

history, over, done. A "pastime" is usually something we humans delight in like playing a sport or reading a book or going to a movie and it might be our favorite pastime.

3. A set of period of time

This is an odd phrase which is not often seen. The phrase, "a set of" is usually tagged with something in the plural form such as, a set of books, a set of dishes or a set of rules. If on that rare occasion one must use the above example phrase, it must be dealt with in the plural form and written as, "A set of periods of time." There you go ... everything you wanted to know about sets, but were afraid to ask.

Friday, March 28

Exhibition

Zhao Yi –
Red Lady Guards

Zhao Yi shows the courageous spirit of women in a new revolution, turning the women in the Red Guard into bright voluptuous divas dancing with strength and determination.

Where: Beijing Central Art Gallery, 2 Riverville Square, 1 District, Tianzhu, Shunyi

When: Mon-Sat 10 am – 7 pm, Sun noon – 8 pm, until April 30

Admission: Free

Tel: 6450 8483, 6450 8646

Proceeding – Contemporary Art Group Exhibition

Where: Sound First Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10 am – 6 pm, until April 14

Admission: Free

Tel: 64312501

The Tale of Silk

Where: F/2 Beijing Today Art Museum, Building 1, 32 Baiziwan Lu, Chaoyang

When: Daily 10 am – 5 pm, until April 18

Admission: Free

Tel: 5876 9690

Movie

Las Vidas de Celia



This film noir is about a woman who, trying to make sense of her own life, discovers that her own unsuccessful suicide attempt coincides with a young girl's murder.

Where: Beijing Institute Cervantes, A 1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5879 9666

Opera

King

Who: Theater National de Toulouse
Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall, on the west side of the Great Hall of the People

When: 7:30 pm, April 3-6

Admission: 180-1,080 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Saturday, March 29

Exhibition

A Guide of
Extravagance
and
Fashion

Li Tingting is trying to carve out a new world in the field of traditional ink and wash painting.

Where: 3818 Cool Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10:30 am – 6:30 pm, until April 16

Admission: Free

Tel: 8688 2525, 8456 6664

Occurrence – Xu Shun
Solo Exhibition

The images Xu Shun has

chosen are mainly fictional entities rather than imaginary nonentities. In his paintings, we see odd holes in city streets or space vehicles parked on farmland.

Where: White Space Beijing, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 11 am – 6 pm, until May 4

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 2054

Growing – Zhao Liang
Solo Exhibition

Where: Beijing 9 Art Space, 3818 warehouse, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 10 am – 6 pm, until April 12

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9663

Movie

Vier Minuten



Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Sunday,
March 30Exhibition
Photography
and Lust –
Chen Weiqun

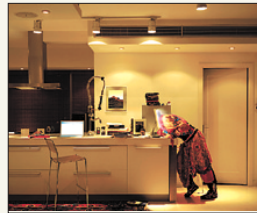
Solo Exhibition

Where: Taikang Top Space, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Daily 10 am – 6 pm, until April 19

Admission: Free

Tel: 6438 8443, 1380 1326 510

Relic and Image-Fabrication – Contemporary
Photo-Imagery
Art Exhibition

Where: Chinablue Gallery, 3/F, Building 7, Yigou Space, 16 A Baiziwan, Chaoyang

When: Daily 9:30 am – 5:30 pm, until February 18

Admission: Free

Tel: 8774 6332

Dolls & Dogs – Oil
Painting Exhibition

Where: Pebeo Space, Red T Gallery, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Mon-Sun 10 am – 6 pm, until May 4

Admission: Free

Tel: 8911 5763

Movie

Les Amants du Flore

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

When: 3 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Stage in April

Concert

China Philharmonic
Orchestra 2007-2008

Musical Festival

Who: Conducted by Long Yu

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm, April 6

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

China Philharmonic
Orchestra 2007-2008

Musical Festival

Who: Conducted by Bramwell Tovey

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, inside Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng

When: 7:30 pm, April 19

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Jolin Tsai Dancing

Forever Beijing Concert

Who: Jolin Tsai

Where: Beijing Workers Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm, April 4-5

Admission: 280-1,680 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

James Blunt

Beijing Concert

Who: James Blunt

Where: Star Live, F/3, Tangguo Building, Yonghegongqiao Bei, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm, April 18

Admission: 380-780 yuan

Tel: 6425 5677

Celine Dion's Taking

Chances World Tour

Who: Celine Dion

Where: Beijing Workers Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm, April 13

Admission: 300-3,000 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

Drama

Hamlet

Who: British TNT Theater

Where: PKU Centennial Memorial Hall, 116 Zhongguancun Bei Dajie, Haidian

When: 7 pm, April 18-20

Admission: 20-150 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Like Shadows

Who: directed by Lai Shengchuan

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang

When: 7:30 pm, April 4-5

Admission: 100-680 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

King

Who: Theater National de Toulouse

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall, on the west side of the Great Hall of the People

When: 7:30 pm, April 3-6

Admission: 180-1,080 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Li Jing)